MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

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Le Duan

THE Vietnam REVOLUTION

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Volume 14 Number 7

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Editorial Comments

DAILY IN THE capitalist world the process of merger accelerates. Big firms become bigger firms and small firms are absorbed or go to the wall. Giants become supra-national monsters.

Nor is this process of capitalist integration at all a peaceful one. In fact competition (competition between giants) grows sharper, and the conflicts between the imperialist powers assume new forms.

The problem of integration and co-ordination of the economies of the different countries of the socialist world is a very urgent one. There are plenty of complex problems involved in it. It is not by any means an automatic process. But whereas, within capitalism, integration is in the last analysis an insoluble problem, and the steps that are taken are normally at the expense of the working people and the independence of nations, under socialism there is a real basis for a democratic and voluntary solution to the advantage of all the people in the countries concerned.

The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) which helps to co-ordinate the economies of the affiliated socialist countries was first set up in 1949, and its very important 23rd (Special) Session, held in April 1969, was concerned with problems of economic, scientific and technical co-operation.

In a recent article in *Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta* (No. 16), M. Lesechko, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and Permanent USSR Representative on the CMEA, made an estimate of the economic strength of the CMEA countries today.

By the end of 1969, he calculated, they covered one-third of the world's total industrial potential. The CMEA members were developing at a much faster rate than the capitalist states. The volume of industrial output had increased 6.3 times compared with 1950, whilst in the developed capitalist countries the parallel growth had only been 2.7 times.

He stressed that the rapid development of science and technique posed new problems and possibilities before the socialist world:

> "The scientific-technological revolution has placed before the CMEA countries the problem of ensuring the continuous conformity of the level of production with the modern state of science and technology, the rapid application in production of scientific discoveries and technical achievements. On this path the fraternal countries are meeting with difficulties in the acceleration of scientific and technological progress within the framework of their national economies. The greater the development, the clearer is the necessity for the closer unification of scientific and technical forces and the expansion of the international socialist division of labour in the field of scientific and technical development".

One of the central problems is the improvement of the co-ordination of economic plans of the CMEA countries, particularly the plans for 1971-1975.

Economic integration is at a new stage. The process, writes M. Lesechko is:

> "Not the simple arithmetical adding up of the economic and production potentials of countries taken individually, but the organic bringing together of the related branches of production; it is a process developing according to plan within the framework of the existence and consolidation of truly independent, sovereign and equal countries, participating in integration, as a result of which the total potential of the integrated complex is multiplied by the efficacy of the division of labour between the fraternal countries".

This economic integration of the socialist countries is one of the main problems facing the socialist world. There is much discussion of the problems involved in the different socialist countries, and we hope, in forthcoming issues of *Marxism Today*, to publish extracts at least from some of the main contributions to this discussion.

LUKACS ON LENIN

Five studies on Lenin by George Lukacs have appeared in Budapest as part of Hungary's anniversary tribute. Published by Magveto, they include an essay which appears in print for the first time.

The studies which range in date from 1924 to 1968 are: "Lenin on the Relations of

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Ideas"; "People's Tribune or Bureaucrat?"; "Lenin and Questions of Culture"; "Lenin's Theory of Knowledge and Problems of Modern Philosophy"; and "Lenin and Questions of the Transitional Period".

"The revolutionary movement," Professor Lukacs writes in his introduction, "created the devoted revolutionary, who gave his whole life to the revolution, but was not an ascetic. Lenin was the first person in whom this appears on a supreme level.

"He realised a new moral ideal throughout his entire life—that a man may live an active, exemplary social life and a life which at the same time is completely satisfying from the personal point of view . . . This is the Lenin I would like to introduce to my readers."

The studies date from four different periods of Lukacs's own life. The first was written in 1924, only a few weeks after Lenin's death. "People's Tribune or Bureaucrat?" was written in 1940 when the contradictions between the cultural and literary ideas of Lenin and Stalin were already evident.

Two essays date from the years immediately following Hungary's liberation (1945-49), when Lukacs wrote a number of articles on the importance of Lenin. The final study, which deals with the problems of the transitional period, was written in 1968 and has not been published before.

One of the major questions raised in this essay is the need for a thorough-going analysis of the contradictions between the Leninist and Stalinist conceptions of, for example, democracy.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

Lukacs writes: "Only a Marxist criticism of Stalin's activities is capable of throwing light on the theoretical and practical discontinuity between Lenin and Stalin. This criticism would also show a historical connection between the fact that Stalin's policies were no nearer to Lenin's than were the lines taken by Lenin's opponents in his later life".

Writing about the concept of the continuity of historical development, Lukacs states that this method of study "links Lenin closely to Marx and radically separates him from Stalin and his followers".

The essay by Lukacs on Lenin which was written in 1924 has been published by the NLB as one of its first publications in the New Left Publishing House.[1] It is excellently translated by Nicholas Jacobs, and translating Lukacs is no easy task.

This is of very great interest not only for the light it throws on Lenin, but for the understanding it provides of the development of Lukacs himself. It was written just after Lenin's death, does not purport to be an exhaustive study, and its central theme is the relationship in Lenin's thought and life of theory and practice.

In his Chapter on "The Vanguard Party of the Proletariat", Lukacs argues that Lenin was the first and for a long time the only Marxist leader who tackled the problem of organisation. Lenin's concept of organisation, he maintains:

> "means a double break with mechanical fatalism; both with the concept of proletarian class-consciousness as a mechanical product of its class situation, and with the idea that the revolution itself was only the mechanical working out of fatalistically explosive economic forces which—given the sufficient 'maturity' of objective revolutionary conditions—would somehow 'automatically' lead the proletariat to victory".

Lukacs divides his study into six Chapters: Actuality of the Revolution; The Proletariat as the Leading Class; The Vanguard Party of the Proletariat; Imperialism; The State as a Weapon; Revolutionary *Realpolitik.*

In this last Chapter there is an interesting critique of Utopian Socialism. The Utopian, writes Lukacs:

> "conceives socialism not as a process of 'becoming', but as a state of 'being'. In so far as the problems of socialism are raised at all, they are studied only as future economic, cultural and other questions and in terms of the possible technical or other solutions to them when socialism has already entered the phase of its practical realisation. How this in the first place becomes socially possible, how it is achieved, or constituted, or what class relations and economic forms the proletariat must confront at the historical moment when it assumes the task of realising socialism, is not asked".

He also criticises the form of ultra-leftism that he calls revolutionary utopianism as:

> "an attempt to pull oneself up by one's own bootstraps, to land with one jump in a completely new world, instead of understanding with the help of the dialectic, the dialectical evolution of the new from the old".

1967 POSTSCRIPT

This NLB edition contains a postscript written by Lukacs in 1967, looking critically back on his work as he had written it in 1924. His ideas, he says, were dated by the period in which he wrote. He criticises his own

[1] Georg Lukacs—"Lenin: A Study in the Unity of Thought", NLB, 30s.

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definition of historical materialism, and makes a number of other self-critical observations.

But perhaps the most interesting and to the point is his recognition that he had failed in 1924 "to give an idea of Lenin as a human type". Lenin, he writes, was *both* principled and devoted to *real* men:

> "Lenin has the fidelity to principle of the previous great ascetics of revolution—but without a shadow of asceticism in his character. He is lively and humorous; he enjoys everything life offers, from hunting, fishing and playing chess to reading Pushkin and Tolstoy; and he is devoted to real men".

Lenin was simple and hated pomposity:

> "Lenin's sober simplicity had . . . an overpowering effect on the masses. Again in contrast to the earlier type of great revolutionary, he was an unequalled tribune of the people, without a trace of rhetoric (compare Lassalle or Trotsky). In private as much as in public life he had a deep aversion to all phrase-mongering, bombast, or exaggeration".

It is interesting that, in 1967, he should add these deeply-felt thoughts on Lenin as a man. For it is a side of Lenin that over a long period was so often missed, and from which there is today so very much to be learned.

REVOLUTION CUBAN STYLE

There is a type of visitor's report on socialist countries that is all enthusiasm and no understanding. The visitor, an instant expert, dashes through the country, "does" it and returns to report undiluted success, all problems solved.

Such reports do little justice to the sweat and sacrifice always involved in the struggle to build socialism, to the complexity of the task, or the vastness of the problems. The real success is one of human struggle, and can only be understood on the background of the problems and difficulties overcome, and of errors corrected.

It is not surprising that Gil Green, an experienced revolutionary, whom some of our older readers will remember as National President of the US Young Communist League in the thirties, who suffered years of prison under McCarthy, should, in his short report on his visit last year to Cuba, avoid such superficial approaches.[2]

His book is openly partisan, unreservedly in support of the Cuban revolution but he discusses in a friendly and serious manner the real problems that have faced Fidel Castro and the Cuban revolutionaries in building socialism.

He shows how the old Batista state was overthrown and smashed and the problems involved in building a new socialist state. He examines the development of democracy in industry, in local government and in the process of law, and the reasons that are put forward to justify the relatively slow process of developing a new socialist Constitution and new formal socialist institutions.

He discusses the attitude of the Cuban revolutionaries to issues of moral and material incentives, and the differences between these attitudes and those held in other countries of the socialist world.

He describes the formation of the Communist Party of Cuba out of the July 26th Movement, led by Castro, and the Partido Socialista Popular (the former Communist Party). This new party is still relatively small in size, and there is discussion as to whether it has been kept too small. Its members are selected by their fellow workers irrespective as to whether these are members of the Party or not. Gil Green comments:

> "This method of choosing Party members, I was told, ensures that the Party remains the vanguard instrument of the working class and not separate from it. It was stressed that if Party members are chosen by the workers and these people also have the power to initiate proceedings to remove someone from the Party's ranks, then the people will understand why there is only one political party".

Gil Green reports on the specific forms of the Cuban revolution, discusses them but does not attempt to pass easy judgments, and this makes his short book the more interesting.

But on the essence of the Cuban revolution he has no doubts, nor on its importance for progressives generally and for the Americas in particular:

> "As Cuba wins its war against underdevelopment it will have a revolutionising effect upon all the rest of Latin America and all other underdeveloped countries of the world. If little Cuba can do this, right next to its implacable foe and in the face of a vicious economic blockade, then there is no reason why every other country cannot also achieve full economic and cultural development . . .
>
> "Revolutionary Cuba is a thorn in the flesh of the US ruling class and that is as it should be. No one expects the Mafia to make friends with those who have tossed it out on its ear and whose very example encourages other victims to do likewise".

[2] Gil Green—"Revolution Cuban Style", Little New World Paperback, International Publishers, New York, available from Central Books, 12s.

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The Vietnamese Revolution: Fundamental Problems, Essential Tasks

Le Duan

On the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the foundation of the Indochinese Communist Party (now the Viet Nam Workers' Party) Comrade Le Duan made an important analysis of the Vietnamese Revolution.

We print below some extensive extracts reproduced from four successive issues of the Viet Nam Courier *(February 23-March 16, 1970).*

The translation, with some minor corrections of grammar, is that of the Viet Nam Courier. *The passages in italics are summaries made by the* Viet Nam Courier. *All the rest is from Le Duan's text.*

Immediately after its foundation in 1930, the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) won leadership of the national movement: organised mass movements and uprisings of 1930-1931, wide ranging political actions and movements in support of popular claims in 1936-1939. Then it successfully directed a political and armed struggle, started as early as the beginning of the Second World War, against French colonialism and Japanese fascism, a struggle crowned with the great Revolution of August 1945 and the wresting back of national independence.

The ICP was thus the first and only party (or political organisation) to lead the national effort to victory. The rebirth of Viet Nam as an independent State has been the work of the popular masses under the leadership of the ICP. This national independence has had to be defended against powerful enemies: under the Party's direction, the war of resistance against French colonialism and that against American imperialism have been successfully waged. Over the past ten years, the Viet Nam Workers' Party has succeeded in advancing the Vietnamese revolution a further step: the first bases of socialism have been laid in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the new régime has opposed a victorious resistance to American aggression.

All these achievements have been possible thanks to a judicious and creative application of the universal principles of Marxism Leninism to the concrete realities of a colonial and semi-feudal country like Viet Nam. Viet Nam's revolutionary experiences will be analysed under the following aspects:

1. *The Party, organiser of all victories.*
2. *Problems of revolutionary strategy.*
3. *Principles and methods of revolutionary action.*
4. *How to build socialism.*

I. The Party, organiser of all victories

The primary essential factor which decided all those historic successes was the founding of, and leadership by, our Party, **a new-type proletarian party holding firm the invincible banner of Marxism-Leninism; a proletarian party which faithfully and fully represents the vital interests and legitimate aspirations of the working class, the labouring people, and the entire nation; a Marxist-Leninist party with a close-knit organisation, a tradition of unity and oneness of mind, and close ties with the masses. . . .**

Our Party has achieved glorious successes in the people's national democratic revolution for it has solved in a sound and inventive manner a series of very basic problems of strategy and tactics.

—To establish and unceasingly consolidate the leadership of the working class and its vanguard, the Marxist-Leninist Party.

—To correctly **combine the two strategic tasks of fighting against imperialism and feudalism,** carrying out the latter task step by step, in close co-ordination with the former and helping it efficiently;

—To rally the large forces of the peasantry, successfully build a firm **worker-peasant alliance,** the main force of the revolution and the key guarantee of the exclusive leadership of the Party of the working class;

—On the basis of the worker-peasant alliance, the Party has set up a broad **National United Front,** which brings together all patriotic and progressive forces and directs the spearhead of the revolution against the common enemy of the nation.

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—**To make a skilful use of the enemy's internal contradictions,** to divide them, neutralise all forces which can be neutralised, isolate the most dangerous foe, and create more favourable conditions for the development of the revolution.

—To make a flexible and accurate application of revolutionary methods, to utilise all forms of organisation and struggle suited to each period, **to build the political forces of the masses as a foundation on which to set up revolutionary armed forces.** When a revolutionary situation prevailed, the Party used both political and armed forces, combined military with political struggle, attacked the enemy in both the rural and urban areas and won victories step by step, advancing towards complete victory.

—To consolidate and strengthen the **people's democratic power,** the great achievement of the revolution, and use it as an efficient instrument in waging the war of resistance and building the new society.

—To realise **international unity** on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

Over the past ten years and more, while completing side by side with our Southern fellow-countrymen the people's national democratic revolution in the whole country, we in the North have assigned to the People's Democratic State the historic role of the **dictatorship of the proletariat** in taking the North on a transition to socialism through the simultaneous accomplishment of **three revolutions:** the revolution in production relations, the technical revolution, and the ideological and cultural revolution, with **the technical revolution as the keystone.** Carrying out the socialist revolution is still a new thing for us, but the realities of the past ten years and more allow us to affirm that the basic orientation in the North's advance towards socialism, as put forward by our Party, is a wholly correct one.

The great experiences of the Vietnamese revolution over the past forty years bear testimony to the successes of Marxism-Leninism in a colonial and semi-feudal country. The history of our Party over the past forty years is the history of the imaginative application of the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of our country. Born and growing up in a society in which the majority of the population is made up of peasants, our Party has drawn into its ranks a large number of members sprung from the peasantry. Yet it has constantly and wholly preserved its character as a revolutionary Party of the working class, first and foremost because it is imbued with the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, shows absolute loyalty to Marxism-Leninism because its political and organisational line is a Marxist-Leninist one, that of the working class . . .

Our Party attaches primary importance to the study of the revolutionary experiences of the brother countries and parties, considering it an absolutely necessary condition for a proletarian Party wishing to discharge its responsibilities. But our Party always starts from the concrete practice of the Vietnamese revolution, and the living realities of Vietnamese society with its original features—historical, sociological, economic, national tradition, etc . . .

II. Problems of Revolutionary Strategy

1. The National Problem and Agrarian Question

As soon as it was founded, the ICP made it clear that the Vietnamese revolution was first a national and democratic one, and that it was to advance directly to the socialist revolution, by-passing the stage of capitalist development. It was in the course of the anti-imperialist struggle that important problems of revolutionary strategy presented themselves, especially that of the interaction between two tasks: the national, i.e. anti-imperialist, and the democratic, i.e. anti-feudal.

. . . Our country is an agricultural one, with 90 per cent of its population made up of peasants. Imperialism relies on feudalism to exploit our people, essentially the peasantry. That is, why to liberate the nation means first and foremost and, in the main, democracy for the peasants . . .

To free the peasants from the yoke imposed on them by the feudal landlords, to bring them land, such is the essence of the democratic revolution; at the same time to do so is to start from the exigencies of the national liberation cause, for "the national problem of colonised peoples is in essence a peasant problem."

Holding firm and aloft the national and democratic banner with the two strategic slogans "National Independence" and "Land to the Tillers", our Party has succeeded in winning large masses of the peasantry to follow the lead of the working class, mobilising other popular strata and taking them along with the workers and peasants to the battle-front of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution . . .

As early as 1945, following the seizure of power, the Party took a series of agrarian measures; in 1953, it launched a radical land reform, and the ensuing mobilisation of peasant energies largely contributed to the military victory of the anti-colonial resistance, especially to the Dien Bien Phu victory.

2. National Independence and Socialism

Since 1954, the situation has become most complex. What was to be done when the Northern half of the country had been entirely liberated, but when the

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South had still to resist American penetration? Should the North have waited for the liberation of the South before advancing to socialism? The answer was: to proceed immediately to Socialism while completing the national democratic revolution in the South.

. . . This is strict implementation of the first programme of the Party, in conformity with the inevitable trend of the national liberation movement in our times, when national democratic revolutions proceed to socialist revolutions, by-passing the stage of capitalist development. This is the only way which guarantees the complete victory of the cause of national liberation, genuine national independence, and the uninterrupted progress and prosperity of the peoples hitherto kept in backwardness by imperialist and colonialist rule. The socialist revolution which has been going on for the last ten years and more has reaped only initial results as yet. But these results are none the less extremely important: they have changed and are changing the face of the North fundamentally and in all fields—political, economic, social and cultural—turning the North into an ever stronger base for the completion of the national democratic revolution in the whole country. By building Socialism, completely defeating the war of destruction waged by the American imperialists, fulfilling the duties of the great rear area to the great fighting front in the resistance to American aggression, for national salvation, our people are supplying a vivid illustration of the greatest truth of our times, namely that in the present era national independence, democracy, and socialism are inseparable.

3. National Independence and Internationalism

The Indochinese Communist Party was the first Vietnamese political organisation to put the national revolution in the context of the world revolution, to incorporate the national movement in the world revolution.

. . . Developing Marxism in the era of imperialism, when capitalism not only weighed down heavily on the proletariat and the toiling people in the "mother countries" but also imposed servitude on the colonial peoples, Lenin issued this call: "Workers of all countries and oppressed peoples, unite!" The strength of this strategic watchword lies in the fact that it points out that, in the present era, the revolutionary effort to overthrow capitalism and take mankind to socialism can only win victory by combining into one single movement the struggle waged by the proletariat in all countries and that against imperialism by the colonial peoples; that the fight for national liberation, independence and democracy carried out by the people of colonial and dependent countries can achieve all-out success only by becoming part and parcel of the world proletarian revolution, by following the necessary trend of development of human society in the present era: the advance towards socialism. As President Ho Chi Minh asserted: "Only socialism, only communism can free the oppressed peoples of the world from servitude."

The problems of national independence and democracy concern not only the colonial peoples but also the working class, workers' parties, and people of developed capitalist countries . . .

4. Working Class and Peasantry

One of the most important contributions of Marxism-Leninism to the national movement is the light it casts on the respective roles of the various social classes, thus making it possible to work out an appropriate policy vis-a-vis each class and each social category.

The first crucial problem of the revolution is correctly and fully to assert the leading role of the working class. Because of its economic, political and historical position, the working class has become the exponent of the progress of human society in our epoch, the only class capable of elevating the toiling people to the mastery of their own destiny. Although young in age and small in number, the Vietnamese proletariat is a very resolutely revolutionary class. Born before the Vietnamese national bourgeoisie, it had hardly grown up when it received the revolutionary light of Marxism-Leninism, and quickly became a conscious political force, unified throughout the regions—North, Centre and South of the country. Sprung from the pauperised toiling peasantry, its close ties with the latter created favourable conditions for the setting up of a firm worker-peasant alliance. Furthermore, the Vietnamese working class entered the political arena at a time when the great Russian October Revolution had scored a triumph which reverberated throughout the five continents, and when, in neighbouring China, following the treason of the bourgeoisie, the Chinese proletariat had stepped forward and seized the national democratic banner . . .

Besides the working class, the leading class, the peasantry is the most active opponent of imperialism and feudalism. The peasants make up the majority of our population and the greatest force in the national democratic revolution. Therefore to make the peasants follow the lead of the working class, develop their great revolutionary potential to the utmost, and build the **worker-peasant alliance** is the basic condition ensuring the triumph of the revolution . . .

In the present era, a movement for social emancipation, for national liberation, can only be truly revolutionary when its core is constituted by the workers and peasants, when it develops with the strength of the worker-peasant alliance and under the leadership of the working class.

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That is the foundation on which have been created the National Front, the people's democratic State, the revolutionary army. Since 1945, the Vietnamese State, while reflecting a broad national union, is primarily a worker-peasant State, which has made possible a direct passage to socialism without a new political revolution. The document further points out that the peasants cannot provide leadership to the revolution and that, by themselves, they cannot even accomplish the land reform. Thanks to the worker-peasant alliance, all difficulties can be overcome, all enemies can be defeated.

5. The Other Classes and the National Front

On the basis of the worker-peasant alliance, the Party has brought together all patriotic and progressive forces, the various ethnic groups and religious communities, in a National United Front spearheaded against imperialism.

. . . The triumph of the revolution cannot be dissociated from the correct Front policy pursued by our Party.

Experience has shown that in carrying out the Front policy one must guard against and oppose both the rightist and "leftist" deviations.

The Front is a unity of opposites which includes various classes allied with each other on the basis of a certain common programme of struggle. That is why one cannot conceive of a classless Front. A principled line requires that one should view and solve all problems related to the Front policy from a class standpoint. There are classes with essentially similar interests; there also exist classes whose interests are linked together only to a certain extent. Each class, for its own interests and for the common interest, allies itself with other classes within the Front. Moreover, the common interest itself is viewed by each class according to its own standpoint.

For the proletariat, on account of its historical position, its class interests and the common national interest are completely at one. But for the other classes, their respective interests and the common national interest converge in some respects, but diverge in others. For this reason, while preserving unity and in order to strengthen it, there must necessarily be a struggle between the viewpoints of the various members of the Front, who represent different classes. One-sided unity, without struggle, in practice leads to the disruption of unity and the liquidation of the Front . . .

Being the leader of the revolution, with a political line which fully represents the common interest of the nation, our Party has naturally been recognised as the leader of the Front. The interest of the revolution and that of the nation require that one should constantly strengthen and consolidate the leading role of the Party within the Front, firmly maintain the Party's independent political line and organisation and oppose all tendencies to downgrade the Party's role and to dissolve the Party in the Front.

Within the National Front, the other social classes have their own respective roles. The petty bourgeoisie, especially the students and intellectuals, are fervently revolutionary.

. . . The various strata of intellectuals and students are ardently patriotic, eager to safeguard the nation's fine cultural tradition and to restore the noble spiritual values of the Vietnamese man, trampled underfoot by the imperialists and feudalists. They have proved to be history-conscious and sensitive to the trend of events. Awakened and stimulated by the seething revolutionary upsurge of the workers and peasants. they have joined the revolutionary ranks in growing numbers and play an important role in the people's movement, especially in the towns and cities.

The national bourgeoisie, bullied by imperialism, is also patriotic in some respects. The evils of capitalism having been laid bare and socialism having revealed itself as the necessary end-result of historical evolution, elements of the national bourgeoisie have, little by little, joined the national and revolutionary movement.

Parallel to carrying out the Front policy, our Party has never failed **to exploit to the utmost the contradictions within the ranks of the enemy, divide and isolate them to the highest degree possible** in order to weaken their position and influence, increase the strength of the revolution to the maximum, and create favourable conditions for its advance.

The Communists should neither passively wait for those contradictions to break out by themselves nor nurture too many illusions. However, they should know that internal contradictions within the enemy camp are exacerbated as the revolutionary movement gains strength, and that to exploit them to the utmost is an imperative rule.

. . . Before the August Revolution, our Party took extremely timely advantage of the mortal conflict between the Japanese and the French in order to give a great impulse to the anti-Japanese resistance for national salvation, and following the Japanese surrender, led the people to seize the opportunity for a victorious general insurrection. After the August Revolution, when the revolutionary power was still in its infancy, when we were facing serious dangers created by internal and external foes, when the situation could be likened to "a thousand-pound weight hanging by a hair", our Party, headed by President Ho Chi Minh, thanks to an extremely clear-sighted political line, at the same time rigorous in principle and flexible in tactics, tided the country over countless seemingly insuperable difficulties.

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We would at one time reach a temporary compromise with Chiang Kai-shek in order to get our hands free to cope with the French colonialists, at another time do the same with the French in order to drive out the Chiang Kai-shek troops and wipe out the reactionaries, their agents, thus gaining time to consolidate our forces and prepare for a nation-wide resistance to French colonialist aggression, which the Party knew was inevitable. Those extremely shrewd moves have been recorded in the history of the revolution in our country as magnificent examples of Leninist tactics of the exploitation of contradictions within the enemy's ranks and the granting of concessions while holding firm to principles.

III. Principles and methods of revolutionary action

It is not enough to define a judicious line and correct objectives. To bring the revolution to fruition one must also work out appropriate principles and methods of action.

Revolution is creation; without a creative spirit, a revolution cannot succeed. There has never been and will never be a unique formula, one that is suited to all circumstances and all times, for waging a revolution. One given formula may be good for a certain country but unfit for another; a correct one in certain times and under certain circumstances, it may be erroneous in other times and circumstances. All depends on concrete historical conditions.

. . . A method, a form of struggle can only be reckoned as the best and most judicious one when it fully meets the requirements of a given concrete situation, when it is wholly suited to the conditions in which it is applied, when it makes it possible to muster to the greatest extent the revolutionary and progressive forces and bring them to the battle-front, when it makes possible a thorough exploitation of the enemy's weaknesses, and, for all these reasons, is likely to bring about the greatest successes possible, given the relation of forces prevailing at the moment.

1. Final Goal and Immediate Targets

It is a matter of principle that, either in day-to-day policies or in the practice of revolutionary struggle, no matter in what way and under what circumstances, a revolutionary can never lose sight of the final goal. To consider the fight for small day-to-day successes and immediate targets as 'everything' while looking upon the final goal as 'nothing', 'to sacrifice the future of the movement to the present,' is to display the worst kind of opportunism, which can only result in the popular masses being kept in eternal servitude.

However, it is by no means sufficient to grasp the final objective. On the basis of a thorough grasp of the revolutionary goal, the art of revolutionary leadership lies in knowing how **to win step by step, in judicious fashion.**

The revolution is the work of the millions of people, of the popular masses, who stand up to overthrow the ruling classes, the classes commanding a colossal machinery of violence together with other material and spiritual means. That is why the revolution is always a long-drawn process . . .

To push the enemy back and wrest success for the revolution step by step, and proceed to total defeat of the enemy and complete victory for the revolution—such is a law of revolutionary struggle.

For this, one must take into account all concrete conditions, both national and international, all factors involved.

To know how to win step by step in judicious manner means, in given times and under given circumstances, to know how to set forth the most appropriate concrete objectives, and, on the strength of objective laws to direct the struggle in such a way as to achieve the maximum success, paving the way for further advances of the revolution and opening up the surest prospects for ultimate triumph.

In the history of the Vietnamese Party, the revolutionary movements of 1930-31 and 1936-39 were decisive stages which bore witness to the revolutionary capabilities of the workers and peasants, the ability of the Party of the working class for leadership, and the possibility of mustering large popular masses for the attainment of concrete objectives without losing sight of the final goal. The setting up of the Viet Minh front under Japanese occupation and the preparations for political and armed struggle during the Second World War, which led to the August Revolution, were applications of those principles and methods of revolutionary action.

2. Organisation and Mobilisation of the Masses

The revolutionary struggle unfolds without ceasing in all aspects of social life: political, economic, cultural. Hence to win step by step means in each arena of struggle to mobilise and organise the masses with a view to frustrating the enemy's successive policies and foiling every one of his designs and manoeuvres; to point out and attain at all costs all objectives that could be attained in any given period and in any given battle, thereby impelling the movement forward and bringing it to a higher level.

Nothing succeeds like success, and each success in any given field stimulates the struggle in other

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fields. Starting from scratch, the movement develops to an ever higher level, driving the enemy from pillar to post, consolidating its partial gains and relentlessly expanding the revolutionary battlefield in a direction leading towards total victory. In the Vietnamese revolution, the seizure of power shows this characteristic feature of evolving from partial insurrections to general insurrection: this is indeed the application of the method of 'winning step by step' to the specific conditions of our revolution.

To combine scientific assessment with revolutionary resolve, to avoid both passivity and voluntarism—only in this way can one answer the aspirations of the masses and lead them on to the road of the revolution.

A revolution is not a 'coup d'état'; it is not the upshot of plots. It is the work of the masses. Hence, **to mobilise and rally the forces of the masses, to set up and expand the political army of the revolution is an essential decisive question.** This task must be attended to in a continuous and sustained way throughout all periods, both when no revolutionary situation has appeared as yet and when such a situation has arisen and grown ripe.

To this end, one must mingle with the masses in day-to-day life, be active wherever the masses are, even within enemy organisations; one must be abreast of the situation both in the enemy camp and in ours, correctly appraise all schemes, moves and capabilities of the enemy, accurately assess the changes happening in his ranks, and at the same time be fully cognisant of the state of mind, wishes and potential power of the masses.

Before the seizure of power, and in the pursuit of that aim, the only weapon available to the revolution, to the masses, is organisation. The hallmark of the revolutionary movement led by the proletariat is its high organisational standard. All activities aimed at gradually bringing the masses to the point where they will rise up and topple the ruling classes boil down to this: to organise, organise, organise. The purpose of political propaganda and agitation is indeed to organise the masses; only by organising the masses in one form or another will conditions be created for educating them and building up the immense strength of the revolution, for, once organised, their power increases one hundred fold. The masses should be organised with a view to waging struggle; conversely, it is through struggle that they are organised and educated and the forces of the revolution developed. Therefore, propaganda, organisation and struggle must be closely associated, the purpose of all being to form and expand the political army of the masses in preparation for decisive leaps forward.

In the course of its existence, the Party has known how to combine legal and illegal actions, without sliding into either legalism or irresolution and passivity. In those mass activities, the art of formulating judicious slogans is of the greatest importance.

The art of giving both strategic and tactical guidance to the revolution, and of directing a struggle as well, manifests itself first and foremost in the setting forth of sharp-edged and relevant slogans that keep pace with the situation.

One should not hold the over-simplified view that economic slogans are reformist, while only political ones are revolutionary. There may be political slogans with a reformist character, and economic ones carrying a revolutionary content. The question is, when is a given slogan put forward? With what is it connected? And what aim does it pursue? A genuinely revolutionary political Party, one that remains constantly faithful to the final goal of the revolution, is able, in one way or another, to stamp the hallmark of the revolution on all slogans and all forms of organisation and struggle, including those with the faintest political tinge, which are considered necessary for the purpose of mustering the masses while the situation is not yet favourable to vigorous revolutionary actions.

A sound slogan often makes it possible to stir up a whole movement. For instance, the slogan "Get the stocks of rice!" put forward in 1945, when famine was rampant, gave a great impetus to the mass movement leading to the general insurrection.

One must distinguish between propaganda slogans and action slogans in order to avoid involving the masses in decisive battles either too soon or too late. Both propaganda and action slogans must continually be altered to fit the concrete situation of the struggle, especially action slogans, which are closely connected with the day-to-day effort and so must show extreme flexibility, changing even by the hour. As the situation develops, one must gradually raise the level of action slogans and ultimately, when the right time comes, turn watchwords which are hitherto for propaganda into ones for direct and resolute action. It is dangerous for the revolution to involve the masses in decisive battles either too late or too soon.

3. On Revolutionary Situations

The revolution can only break out when the situation is ripe. One should neither wait passively for it to grow mature, nor skip intermediate stages.

Before and after the First World War, revolutionary situations and the outbreaks and triumphs of revolutions were generally connected in one way or another with world wars provoked by imperialism. However, one should not draw the conclusion that war is either the necessary source or *sine qua non*

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condition of revolution and that one should consequently wait for war to break out before making revolution. Revolution is first and foremost the result of class contradictions exacerbated to the extreme in given countries. Taking advantage of this situation, the Communists advocated the 'transformation of imperialist wars into revolutionary civil wars'.

The present international situation differs radically from that before and after the First World War. Now that the world socialist system and the forces battling against imperialism with a view to transforming society in a socialist way are deciding the essential content, orientation, and characteristic features of the development of the history of human society, the possibility of breaking the weak links in the remaining part of the imperialist chain has increased to an unprecedented degree, at the same time as the practical feasibility appears of preventing a world war. The fundamental interest of the proletariat, people, and the nations of the world lies in **safeguarding world peace while pushing forward the revolution in various countries.**

These two objectives are organically linked together, each being the premise of the other, and are both perfectly attainable once the Communists, with a thorough understanding of the strategic offensive posture of the world revolution, succeed in setting up a united front, bringing together all currents of the world revolution, all forces fighting for peace, national independence, democracy and socialism, and are resolved to defeat all aggressive wars triggered off by the imperialists, foil every one of their warlike moves and schemes, drive back imperialism step by step, knock it down piece by piece, and eventually overthrow it in its entirety.

South Vietnam affords a striking example.

The South Vietnamese revolution proves that in the absence of a world war, while instead world peace has to be safeguarded, the revolution can none the less break out and be crowned with success. To intensify the anti-imperialist revolution, far from being incompatible with the defence of peace, is proved in practice to be a very fundamental way of attacking imperialism in order to defend the peace of the world in a truly effective manner. Conversely, to prevent a world war, to maintain peace, is also a very important way of attacking imperialism and creating more favourable objective conditions for the revolution to progress in all countries.

The South Vietnamese revolution proves that a fascist regime cannot stop the outbreak of a revolution; it is precisely the recourse to fascist methods which betrays its political weakness.

4. On Revolutionary Violence

That a revolutionary situation prevails means that the problem of seizure of power is immediately at hand. How power can be won depends on the specific conditions of each country. However, under all circumstances the only road to power lies in revolution, not reform.

The question is always to confront the violence of the ruling classes with the violence of the exploited and oppressed classes; one must know how to combine political with armed struggle and rely on the political as well as armed forces of the revolution.

If one does not keep one's forces, including one's armed forces, in full readiness, one will not be able to resist the fierce onslaught of the enemy. However, violence does not rely solely on armed forces, nor does it assume only the form of military struggle; it is absolutely necessary to have political forces and to wage political actions. Failing the political forces and political struggle of the masses, success cannot be won by military struggle and armed forces. It goes without saying that not all forms of political struggle mean violence. The only actions that may be so considered are the revolutionary actions undertaken by the masses in defiance of the State laws of the ruling classes and **directly aimed** at overthrowing their rule and winning power for the people, once the question of seizure of political power has been raised.

The revolutionary violence aimed at toppling the ruling classes must necessary be **that of the masses,** of the broad masses that are oppressed and exploited. Under the leadership of the Party, they can display their strength and resolve in countless ways. The best, most revolutionary method is one that can create and organise forms of violence that are the best adapted to the prevailing circumstances, that can mobilise to the highest degree the power of the masses and hurl it at the ruling classes . . .

The triumph of the August 1945 Revolution was due to the skilful application of two principles and methods: first, to combine political action with armed struggle, and second, to seize the opportune moment.

As evidenced by the experience of all revolutions, one very important question, besides the preparation of political and military forces, is to **seize the opportune moment.** This moment may be brought about either by revolutionary forces at home or by conditions abroad. Failing sufficient revolutionary forces, one will not be able either to create a favourable opportunity, or to take timely advantage of it, should it present itself. Therefore, the crucial thing is to make sustained efforts aimed at tipping the scale in our favour and achieving decisive superiority for the revolution, with regard to both posture and strength. Now, when will the fire of revolution blaze up? What spark will set off the powder keg? Once the revolution has acquired firm posture and strength and the enemy has been

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driven to the wall, the daily political and social life will supply us with every favourable opportunity and circumstance to fan up a great movement, the problem only depending on the leaders' especial clearsightedness and sensitivity.

As Lenin said: history in general, and revolutionary history in particular, always unfolds in a more abundant, varied, vivid, way than the most outstanding politically-conscious vanguards of the most progressive classes could ever imagine. That is why in the course of a revolution, it often suffices that the leaders are in full possession of the fundamental orientation and certain basic factors and conditions and dare to act. As action evolves, things will reveal their possibilities and trend of development, and at the same time the boundless creative power of the masses, the makers of history, will help us take our bearings and provide us with solutions for concrete problems.

IV. How to Build Socialism

Following the victory of the anti-French resistance in 1954, the question was posed for the Northern half of Vietnam upon which way of development to embark. The answer given by the Vietnam Workers' Party was that the country should and could advance directly to socialism, bypassing the stage of capitalist development, in spite of the legacy of economic and cultural backwardness, left by centuries of feudalism and nearly a century of colonialism.

1. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Triple Revolution to Make

The possibility of building socialism rests upon two factors, one international, the other national. On the international level the existence of a world socialist system and the strength of the national liberation movement have radically changed the relation of forces in favour of the revolution.

In countries where the workers and peasants play the decisive role and the vanguard of the working class has taken leadership of the revolution, the success of the national democratic revolution is not only a victory won by the people over imperialism and feudalism but also a political triumph of the proletariat vis-a-vis the native bourgeoisie, the triumph of a State of a new type. Hence, **the victorious completion of the national democratic revolution also means the opening of the socialist revolution.** The worker-peasant revolutionary power led by the working class immediately sets about discharging the historical duties of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to carry out a socialist revolution and build socialism.

In our country, the dictatorship of the proletariat came into being at a time when production forces were extremely backward and the material premises of socialist building still very weak. The social system of production stood at a cross-roads: either to advance to socialism, or to capitalism, or to linger for a time in the state of small-scale production. In order to build socialism, we must establish right from the beginning both new production forces and new production relations, both a new economic foundation and a new superstructure. In these conditions, the **initiative** of the dictatorship of the proletariat, its **constructive and organisational role** and the **political consciousness** of the working masses in creating the new society assume tremendous importance.

Class struggle continues; the regime has to wipe out all vestiges of capitalism, all forms of exploitation, all tendencies towards spontaneous capitalist development, and to repress all attempts of counter-revolutionary restoration. However, in a country where small-scale production prevails and where capitalism was almost non-existent, the suppression of counter-revolutionary forces is not enough either for building the bases of socialism or for ensuring its success.

The basic problem is to convert small individual production into large-scale socialist production, and build almost from scratch the whole material and technical basis, the economic foundation and the superstructure of a socialist society by means of the simultaneous carrying out of three revolutions; the revolution in production relations, the technical revolution, and the ideological and cultural revolution.

. . . Consequently the struggle between the two ways, the capitalist and the socialist, in the North of our country consists essentially in **striving to turn small production into large-scale socialist production.** To firmly install the **dictatorship of the proletariat** in order to carry out **three simultaneous revolutions, the** keystone being the technical revolution, constitutes the **essential content of class struggle in the period of transition to socialism in the North of our country.**

To slacken vigilance against counter-revolutionary schemes is a serious mistake, but to over-estimate the reactionary forces and neglect the tasks of building and organisation is also a major blunder.

2. The Necessity for a Triple Revolution

New production relations, technical revolution, ideological and cultural revolution are closely linked together. New production relations pave the way for the technical revolution and consolidate the worker-peasant alliance; thus is laid the foundation from which stem the new ideas which are the hallmark of the new man. Concerning the production relations,

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it is not enough to liquidate the capitalist system and to convert small individual exploitation.

Immediately after instituting the collective ownership of the means of production by the working people, we must solve a whole series of important problems: how to manage collective labour and collective property so as to get the fastest extended reproduction, carry out the technical revolution at the fastest tempo, effect the most rational redivision of social labour and attain the highest labour productivity; how to organise the system of social production so as to ensure both unified central leadership and the exercise of the right of the various branches and regions and all the working people as collective masters; how to distribute income so as to secure adequate accumulation for extended reproduction while improving the people's living standards, to encourage industriousness while fully displaying the social spirit of socialism, to see to the material welfare of the people while developing culture, education, science and technique; what economic and administrative measures to adopt in order to consolidate and improve the socialist economic organisations while expanding the field of action of socialism, drawing individual producers into co-operatives, strengthening market control, fighting speculation, setting right all shortcomings and flaws in the management of land and labour, etc.

Freedom and equality have been ensured to all, but the material and technical bases of the regime are still too weak.

'Communism is Soviet power plus electrification' —Lenin's famous formula helps us get a fuller grasp of the problem. Soviet power means dictatorship of the proletariat, the right of the toiling people to be the masters. Electrification means large-scale industry based on electrification, the material and technical basis of the new society. Without one of these two factors, there can be neither socialism nor communism. As we start from small production, what we badly need is what Lenin called 'electrification'. Only on the basis of electrification can we consolidate the socialist economic system, the worker-peasant alliance and the dictatorship of the proletariat, eradicate small-producer mentality and habits, strengthen and develop socialist ideology, bring the toiling people material welfare and a civilised life and make them masters not only of society but also of nature.

. . . At present, in our own camp as in many other countries of the world, a new scientific and technical revolution is unfolding. . . . That is why the productive forces of our country must and can at the same time develop **gradually** according to the law of change, from small to large-scale production and by **leaps,** direct to mechanisation and automation, first of all to mechanisation. On the one hand, we must turn to full account all possibilities of handicraft production and take it step by step to semi-mechanisation and mechanisation, strive to expand regional economy and couple it with agriculture with a view to a re-division of social labour, thus creating conditions for the birth of large-scale industry. On the other hand, we must on the strength of the supremacy inherent in the socialist economic system, the active help of the brother socialist countries and international exchanges, bend every effort to build a big industry with modern technology, make economic and technical leaps, and through these leaps advance towards the modernisation of the whole of our national economy.

In addition, we need new men. The entire people's moral, cultural, ideological life is to be radically changed.

The passage to socialism without going through the capitalist stage is a new way of development which requires a high creative spirit and sense of responsibility; however the ideas and habits in our society still bear the stamp of a system of small production, and our people's cultural, scientific, and technical standard is still poor, hence the particular importance of the ideological and cultural revolution.

The new men, loyal to their fatherland and the working-class, conscious of being the collective master of the country, imbued with a staunch internationalist spirit, resolved to defend the fruits of the revolution, are also men of science and culture. Imbued with new ideas, they also foster in themselves all the traditional virtues of our people.

3. Industry and Agriculture

For primitive accumulation, socialism cannot resort to the inhuman means used by capitalism at its beginning.

. We must know how to **build a rational economic structure and carry out a new division of labour** on the basis of the collective mastery of the toiling people, with a view to giving a strong boost to production and quickly increasing labour productivity. In order to build a rational economic structure, we must correctly establish the positions and pace of development of, and the relationships between, the various branches of industry and agriculture, the central and regional economy, production and distribution.

. . . Right from the beginning, industry must be made to act on agriculture, and agriculture be closely co-ordinated with industry, both central and regional. These relationships between agriculture and industry can only be established through the building of a central and a regional economy.

. . . There begins the process of birth and growth of our country's large-scale socialist production.

That is why the Third Congress of our Party

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asserted: 'We must give priority to the rational development of heavy industry, strive to promote agriculture and light industry, take industry as the leading force and agriculture as the basis for industrial development, co-ordinate regional with central economy. . . . Socialist industrialisation, the keystone of which is the building of a modern heavy industry, is the central task all through the period of transition to socialism'. However, in order to build a heavy industry, there must be pre-conditions to be created by agriculture and light industry. These are the labour force, consumer goods, primitive accumulation, and market.

Under capitalism, it took heavy industry a long time to come into being after the development of light industry. Our socialist regime and the help of the brother socialist countries make it possible for us to tackle the building of a heavy industry at an early date. However we must bear in mind the present weakness of our agriculture and light industry.

At present, the most important task of heavy industry is to create the conditions making it possible to **equip the labour force of our whole country, primarily in agriculture and light industry, with tools of various kinds** and various technical levels, both rudimentary and modern, in accordance with each branch and each category of work so as to quickly raise labour productivity at least two or three-fold.

The modernisation of work tools is the main link in bringing about increased productivity, and mechanical engineering in industry plays the decisive role. The electrical, building materials, metallurgical and chemical industries are among the most important ones.

The development of heavy industry requires a balanced expansion of light industry, which produces necessaries for the people and goods for export during the period of primitive accumulation and is an important outlet for heavy industry.

What with an underdeveloped economy and many years of war, our people's material life is still penurious and many urgent problems have to be solved. At present, we are not yet able to change radically the general level of material life for our entire society; however, to ensure a minimum standard of living indispensible during the early stage of industrialisation, we mrst develop light industry, increase the production of consumer goods at a quick rate, and put an end to unnecessary shortages.

On the other hand, with our abundant and skilful work force and our available natural resources, especially our rich tropical agriculture, we can give a strong boost to light industry and quickly turn out a great variety of consumer items both for home consumption and partly for export.

Agriculture, which produces foodstuffs, raw materials for industry, and goods for export, must be entirely renovated. Each region—plain, midland, highland—has its own peculiar traits which should be turned to account. The sea is also a great source of wealth. The important task of the moment is intensive cultivation, embodied in this watchword: 5 tons, one farmer, two pigs, per hectare.

'Five tons per hectare' does not mean simply to supply enough food to rice-growers but to our whole society; it does not mean that the food question will be solved with rice solely, but also with dry crops, vegetables and other foodstuffs in appropriate proportions according to the peculiarities of each region.

'One farmer per hectare', is not solely aimed at providing adequate manpower for intensive cultivation but also at new division of labour in order to develop agriculture and industry while reserving part of the work force for turning out export goods.

'Two pigs per cultivated hectare' is not only aimed at supplying meat for home consumption, but also manure for intensive cultivation and part of the meat for export.

To bend every effort towards these three targets is to strive to turn monoculture into many-sided agriculture, bring regional economy into full play, and redistribute labour in each region as a basis for a new, nation-wide, division of labour.

Much has to be done to achieve this agricultural development: technique, management, direction; and balanced relations between industry and agriculture.

If we are to fulfil the two fundamental economic tasks of the initial stage—accumulation of capital for industrialisation and satisfaction of the people's needs—our still backward agriculture must go through a process of profound revolutionary transformation in many respects: transformation of production relations coupled with technical improvement; many-sided agricultural development coupled with regional specialisation; intensive cultivation and crop rotation combined with expansion of cultivated areas. Such a revolutionary transformation of agriculture cannot be the work of the peasantry alone, but also of the working class, the whole of the socialist State, all branches and all levels.

4. Central Economy and Regional Economy

The relationships between an agriculture being diversified and an industry being developed are most complex ones; they vary at each moment according to the technical level reached in each sector.

For the present, while a new division of labour is being carried into effect in agriculture and centrally-run industry is still young, the combination of agriculture with industry in each region assumes

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particular importance. Hence, with a view to bringing about an **optimum balance between industry and agriculture,** one must transfer responsibilities for economic management to the various regional echelons, provide stronger assistance from the central level, create prosperous regional economies while building up the various branches of the centrally-run economy.

One must distinguish between problems of national and those of regional import, set up big undertakings while converting small production, associate a unified central direction with the exercise of the right of regional organs as collective masters.

The central authorities can and must see to basic consumer needs with a nationwide character, while the various regions must cater to secondary ones in an adequate and timely way . . . For this reason, the problem of **balance between production and consumption** must be raised and solved not only on a national scale, but also for each region.

The advance from small handicraft production to large-scale modern production necessarily calls for a **re-division of social labour.** A given technical level necessarily begets a certain division of labour. At present when productive forces have grown beyond national boundaries, social labour should be distributed not only within the framework of individual nations but also to a certain extent on an international scale. In our country, the agricultural labour force with a very low productivity, still makes up three-fourths of the total social labour force. Hence, a new division of labour means first and foremost a re-division of agricultural labour. To transfer part of agricultural labour over to industry, transport and communications, to upgrade low-productivity labour to a highly productive level—such are the urgent requirements of economic building, such is the essential aim of labour management in the present stage.

The new division of labour is carried into effect essentially by starting from the regional economies, from the grassroots; to rely on centrally-run activities will slow down the movement. The relationships between town and countryside will also change.

To build a centrally-run economy while concurrently developing the regional economy is the best way to associate town and countryside and quickly do away with differences between the two. By constructing centrally-run industrial bases at appropriate sites and expanding regional economy, which includes agriculture and regional industry, we shall be able to **develop both town and countryside.**

Towns will appear in many different places, in close association with rural areas. Besides some relatively big cities which will serve as political, economic, and cultural centres for the whole country, we shall, on the basis of economic development, build a large number of small and medium-sized towns in various places so as to bring their influence to bear upon rural areas, helping the latter progress at a fast pace in the economic, cultural and social fields. We shall then give a new face to every region, in the highlands as well as in the lowlands, and provide all citizens, wherever they may live, with a decent material life and a rich and wholesome cultural one.

The building of regional economies is also highly important for national defence. It involves many management problems which must be solved in accordance with the necessity to ensure unified central leadership. General formulae are not enough; one must go deep into concrete questions of organisation, control, attribution of responsibility, and guard against both bureaucratism and tendencies towards anarchy.

5. Problems of Economic Management

In economic management, a new field, we must point out many present shortcomings. Management work should take full account of the peculiarities and keep pace with the evolution of a growing economy, which may be likened to a living organism . . .

Planning work should be carried out on three levels; central, regional and grassroots, and comprise both long-term and short-term plans. At present we are not yet in possession of all economic data; so we must combine planning with the application of market laws and know how to operate these levers: price, wages, profit, credit. Each undertaking, each branch must contribute to accumulation without, however, indulging in short-sighted policies, the main target being the development of production.

The organisation of distribution is of great importance, together with that of finances.

The question of the relationships between the Party, responsible for political leadership, and State organs, entrusted with concrete management problems must be correctly settled. The trade unions and youth organisations should play their roles.

With an experienced Party, which has fully assimilated Marxism-Leninism, with an already fairly rich experience in economic construction, relatively numerous cadres, entirely renovated production relations, our people's traditional industriousness, and the devoted help of the brother countries, we shall certainly be successful in our building of socialism.

Our generation feels boundless pride, for having not only defeated "two big imperialisms—the French and the American", but also opened the way for the building on Vietnamese soil of a socialist fatherland, strong and beautiful, independent and free, where democracy and happiness reign, thus fulfilling the wishes of Uncle Ho and our entire people.

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Lenin Centenary

Lenin and the "Aristocracy of Labour"

E. J. Hobsbawm

The following brief essay is a contribution to the discussion of Lenin's thought, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of his birth. The subject is one which can be conveniently treated by a British Marxist, since the concept of an "aristocracy of labour" is one which Lenin clearly derived from the history of British 19th century capitalism. His concrete references to the "aristocracy of labour" as a stratum of the working class appear to be exclusively drawn from Britain (though in his study notes on imperialism he also notes similar phenomena in the "white" parts of the British Empire). The term itself is almost certainly derived from a passage by Engels written in 1885 and reprinted in the introduction to the 1892 edition of the *Conditions of the Working Class in 1844* which speaks of the great English trade unions as forming "an aristocracy among the working class".

Engels' Approval

The actual phrase may be Engels', but the concept was familiar in English politico-social debate, particularly in the 1880s. It was generally accepted that the working class in Britain at this period contained a favoured stratum—a minority but a numerically large one—which was most usually identified with the "artisans" (i.e. the skilled employed craftsmen and workers) and more especially with those organised in trade unions or other working class organisations. This is the sense in which foreign observers also used the term, e.g. Schulze-Gaevernitz, whom Lenin quotes with approval on this point in the celebrated eighth chapter of *Imperialism*. This conventional identification was not entirely valid, but, like the general use of the concept of an upper working class stratum, reflected an evident social reality. Neither Marx nor Engels nor Lenin "invented" a labour aristocracy. It existed only too visibly in the second half of nineteenth century Britain. Moreover, if it existed anywhere else, it was clearly much less visible or significant. Lenin assumed that, until the period of imperialism, it existed nowhere else.

The novelty of Engels' argument lay elsewhere. He held that this aristocracy of labour was made possible by the industrial world monopoly of Britain, and would therefore disappear or be pushed closer to the rest of the proletariat, with the ending of this monopoly. Lenin followed Engels on this point, and indeed in the years immediately preceding 1914, when the British labour movement was becoming radicalised, tended to stress the second half of Engels' argument, e.g. in his articles *English Debates on a Liberal Workers' Policy* (1912), *The British Labour Movement in 1912*, and *In England, the Pitiful Results of Opportunism* (1913). While not doubting for a moment that the labour aristocracy was the basis of the opportunism and "Liberal-Labourism" of the British movement, he did not appear as yet to emphasise the international implications of the argument. For instance, he did not apparently use it in his analysis of the social roots of revisionism (see *Marxism and Revisionism*, 1918, and *Differences in the European Labour Movement*, 1910). Here he argued rather that revisionism, like anarcho-syndicalism, was due to the constant creation on the margins of developing capitalism, of certain middle strata—small workshops, domestic workers, etc.—which are in turn constantly cast into the ranks of the proletariat, so that petty-bourgeois tendencies inevitably infiltrate into proletarian parties.

The line of thought which he derived from his knowledge of the labour aristocracy was at this stage somewhat different, and it is to be noted that he maintained it, in part at least, to the end of his political life. Here it is perhaps relevant to observe that Lenin drew his knowledge of the phenomenon not only from the writings of Marx and Engels, who commented frequently on the British labour movement, and from his personal acquaintance with Marxists in England (which he visited six times between 1902 and 1911), but also from the fullest and best-informed work on the "aristocratic" trade unions of the 19th century, Sidney and Beatrice Webb's *Industrial Democracy*. This im-

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portant book he knew intimately, having translated it in his Siberian exile. It provided him, incidentally, with an immediate understanding of the links between the British Fabians and Bernstein: "The original source of a number of Bernstein's contentions and ideas", he wrote on 13 September, 1899, to a correspondent, "is in the latest books written by the Webbs." Lenin continued to quote information drawn from the Webbs many years later, and specifically refers to *Industrial Democracy* in the course of his argument in *What Is To Be Done?*

"The Conscious Element"

Two propositions may be derived in part, or mainly, from the experience of the British labour aristocracy. The first was "that all subservience to spontaneity of the labour movement, all belittling of the role of 'the conscious element', of the role of Social Democracy *means, whether one likes it or not, the growth of influence of bourgeois ideology among the workers.*" The second was that a purely trade unionist struggle "is necessarily a struggle according to trade, because conditions of labour differ very much in different trades, and consequently, the fight to *improve* these conditions can only be conducted in respect of each trade". (*What Is To Be Done*; the second argument is supported by direct reference to the Webbs.)

The first of these propositions appears to be based on the view that, under capitalism, bourgeois ideology is hegemonic, unless deliberately counteracted by "the conscious element". This important observation leads us far beyond the mere question of the labour aristocracy, and we need not pursue it further here. The second proposition is more closely linked to the aristocracy of labour. It argues that, given the "law of uneven development" within capitalism—i.e. the diversity of conditions in different industries, regions—etc. of the same economy—a purely "economist" labour movement must tend to fragment the working class into "selfish" ("petty-bourgeois") segments each pursuing its own interest, if necessary in alliance with its own employers, at the expense of the rest. (Lenin several times quoted the case of the "Birmingham Alliances" of the 1890s, attempts at a joint union-management bloc to maintain prices in various metal trades; he derived this information almost certainly also from the Webbs.) Consequently such a purely "economist" movement must tend to disrupt the unity and political consciousness of the proletariat and to weaken or counteract its revolutionary role.

This argument is also very general. We can regard the aristocracy of labour as a special case of this general model. It arises when the economic circumstances of capitalism makes it possible to grant significant concessions to its proletariat, within which certain strata of workers manage, by means of their special scarcity, skill, strategic position, organisational strength etc., to establish notably better conditions for themselves than the rest. Hence there may be historic situations, as in late nineteenth century England, when the aristocracy of labour can almost be identified with the effective trade union movement, as Lenin sometimes came close to suggesting.

The Craft Spirit

But if the argument is in principle more general, there can be no doubt that what was in Lenin's mind when he used it, was the aristocracy of labour. Time and again we find him using phrases such as the following: "the petty-bourgeois craft spirit which prevails among this aristocracy of labour" (*The Session of the International Socialist Bureau, 1908*), "the English trade unions, insular, aristocratic, philistinely selfish", "the English pride themselves on their 'practicalness' and their dislike of general principles; this is an expression of the craft spirit in the labour movement" (*English Debates on a Liberal Workers' Policy*, 1912), and "this aristocracy of labour . . . isolated itself from the mass of the proletariat in close, selfish, craft unions" (*Harry Quelch*, 1913). Moreover, much later, and in a carefully considered programmatic statement—in fact in his *Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question for the Second Congress of the Communist International* (1920), the connection is made with greatest clarity:

> The industrial workers cannot fulfil their world-historical mission of emancipating mankind from the yoke of capital and from wars if these workers concern themselves exclusively with their narrow craft, narrow trade interests, and smugly confine themselves to care and concern for improving their own, sometimes tolerable, petty-bourgeois conditions. This is exactly what happens in many advanced countries to the 'labour aristocracy' which serves as the base of the alleged Socialist parties of the Second International."

Imperialism and Opportunism

This quotation, combining the earlier and the later ideas of Lenin about the aristocracy of labour, leads us naturally from the one to the other. These later writings are familiar to all Marxists. They date in the main from the period 1914-1917, and form part of Lenin's attempt to provide a coherent Marxist explanation for the outbreak of the war and especially the simultaneous, and traumatic, collapse of the Second International and most of its constituent parties. They are stated most fully in the famous Chapter eight of *Imperialism*, and the article *Imperialism and the Split in Socialism* written a little later (autumn 1916) and complementing it.

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The argument of *Imperialism* is well-known, though the glosses of *Imperialism and the Split* are not so widely known. Broadly speaking it runs as follows. Thanks to the peculiar position of British capitalism—"vast colonial possessions and monopolist position in the world markets"—the British working class tended already in the mid-nineteenth century to be divided into a favoured minority of labour aristocrats and a much larger lower stratum. The upper stratum "becomes bourgeois", while at the same time "a section of the proletariat allows itself to be led by people who are bought by the bourgeoisie, or at least are in their pay." In the epoch of imperialism what was once a purely British phenomenon is now found in all the imperialist powers. Hence opportunism, degenerating into social-chauvinism, characterised all the leading parties of the Second International. However, "opportunism cannot now triumph in the working class movement of any country for decades as it did in England" because world monopoly has now to be shared between a number of competing countries. This imperialism while generalising the phenomenon of the aristocracy of labour, also provides the conditions for its disappearance.

The relatively cursory passages of *Imperialism* are expanded into a rather fuller argument in *Imperialism and the Split*. The existence of a labour aristocracy is explained by the super-profits of monopoly, which allows the capitalists "to devote a part (and not a small one at that!) to bribe *their own workers*, to create something like an alliance between the workers of a given nation and their capitalists *against* the other countries." This "bribery" operates through trusts, the financial oligarchy, high prices etc. (i.e. something like joint monopolies between a given capitalism and its workers). The amount of the potential bribe is substantial—Lenin estimated it as perhaps one hundred million francs out of a billion—and so, under certain circumstances, is the stratum which benefits from it. However "the question as to how this little sop is distributed among labour ministers, 'labour representatives' . . . labour members of war industrial committees, labour officials, workers organised in narrow craft unions, office employees, etc. etc., is a secondary question." The remainder of the argument, with exceptions to be noted below, amplifies but does not substantially alter, the argument of *Imperialism*.

It is essential to recall that Lenin's analysis was attempting to explain a specific historic situation—the collapse of the Second International—and to buttress specific political conclusions which he drew from it. He argued first, that since opportunism and social chauvinism represented only a minority of the proletariat, revolutionaries must "go down *lower* and *deeper*, to the real masses", and second, that the "bourgeois labour parties" were now irrevocably sold to the bourgeoisie, and would neither disappear before the revolution nor in some way "return" to the revolutionary proletariat, though they might "swear by the name of Marx" wherever Marxism was popular among the workers. Hence revolutionaries must reject a factitious unity between the revolutionary proletarian and the opportunist philistine trend within the labour movement. In brief, the international movement had to be split, so that a communist labour movement could replace a social-democratic one.

The Corrupted Minority

These conclusions applied to a specific historical situation, but the analysis supporting them was more general. Since it was part of a specific political polemic as well as a broader analysis, some of the ambiguities of Lenin's argument about imperialism and the labour aristocracy are not to be scrutinised too closely. As we have seen, he himself pushed certain aspects of it aside as "secondary". Nevertheless, the argument is in certain respects unclear or ambiguous. Most of its difficulties arise out of Lenin's insistence that the corrupted sector of the working class is and can only be a minority, or even, as he sometimes suggests polemically, a tiny minority, as against the masses who are not "infected with 'bourgeois respectability'" and to whom the Marxists must appeal, for "this is the essence of Marxian tactics".

In the first place, it is evident that the corrupted minority could be, even on Lenin's assumptions, a numerically large sector of the working class and an even larger one of the organised labour movement. Even if it only amounted to 20 per cent of the proletariat, like the labour organisations in late nineteenth century England or in 1914 Germany (the illustration is Lenin's), it could not be simply written off politically, and Lenin was too realistic to do so. Hence a certain hesitation in his formulations. It was not the labour aristocracy as such, but only "a stratum" of it which had deserted economically to the bourgeoisie (*Imperialism and the Split*). It is not clear which stratum. The only types of workers specifically mentioned are the functionaries, politicians etc. of the reformist labour movements. These are indeed minorities—tiny minorities—corrupted and sometimes frankly sold to the bourgeoisie, but the question why they command the support of their followers is not discussed.

In the second place, the position of the mass of the workers is left in some ambiguity. It is clear that the mechanism of exploiting a monopoly of markets, which Lenin regards as the basis of "opportunism", function in ways which cannot confine its benefits to one stratum only of the working class. There is good reason to suppose that the "something like an alliance" "between the workers

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of the given nation and their capitalists *against* the other countries" (and which Lenin illustrates by the Webbs' "Birmingham Alliances") implies some benefits for *all* workers, though obviously much larger ones for the well organised and strategically strong labour aristocrats among them. It is indeed true that the world monopoly of nineteenth century British capitalism, may have provided the lower proletarian strata with no significant benefits, while it provided the labour aristocracy with substantial ones. But this was because there was, under the conditions of competitive, liberal "laissez-faire" capitalism and inflation *no* mechanism other than the market (including the collective bargaining of the few proletarian groups capable of applying it), for distributing the benefits of world monopoly to the British workers.

Collective Corruption?

But under the conditions of imperialism and monopoly capitalism this was no longer so. Trusts, price-maintenance, "alliances" etc. did provide a means of distributing concessions more generally to the workers affected. Moreover, the role of the state was changing, as Lenin was aware. "Lloyd Georgism" (which he discussed most perceptively in *Imperialism and the Split*) aimed at "securing fairly substantial sops for the obedient workers, in the shape of social reforms (insurance, etc.)". It is evident that such reforms were likely to benefit the "non-aristocratic" workers relatively more than the already comfortably situated "aristocrats".

Finally, Lenin's theory of imperialism argues that the "handful of the richest, privileged nations" turned into "parasites on the body of the rest of mankind", i.e. into collective exploiters, and suggests a division of the world into "exploiting" and "proletarian" nations. Could the benefits of such a collective exploitation be confined entirely to a privileged layer of the metropolitan proletariat? Lenin was keenly aware that the original Roman proletariat was a collectively parasitic class. Writing about the Stuttgart Congress of the International in November 1907 he observed:

> The class of those who own nothing but do not labour either is incapable of overthrowing the exploiters. Only the proletarian class, which maintains the whole of society, has the power to bring about a successful social revolution. And now we see that, as the result of a far-reaching colonial policy the European proletariat has *partly* reached a situation where it is *not* its work that maintains the whole of society but that of the people of the colonies who are practically enslaved. . . . In certain countries these circumstances create the material and economic basis for infecting the proletariat of one country or another with colonial chauvinism, of course this may perhaps be only a temporary phenomenon, but one must nevertheless clearly recognise the evil and understand its causes . . ."

"Marx frequently referred to a very significant saying of Sismondi's to the effect that the proletarians of the ancient world lived at the expense of society whereas modern society lives at the expense of the proletarians" (1907). Nine years later, in the context of a later discussion, *Imperialism and the Split* still recalls that "the Roman proletariat lived at the expense of society."

In Historical Perspective

Lenin's analysis of the social roots of reformism is often presented as if it dealt only with the formation of a labour aristocracy. It is of course undeniable that Lenin stressed this aspect of his analysis far more than any other, and for purposes of political argument, almost to the exclusion of any other. It is also clear that he hesitated to follow up other parts of his analysis, which seemed to have no bearing on the political point he was at this time overwhelmingly concerned to make. However, a close reading of his writings shows that he did consider other aspects of the problem, and that he was aware of some of the difficulties of an excessively one-sided "labour aristocratic" approach. Today, when it is possible to separate what is of permanent relevance in Lenin's argument from what reflects the limits of his information or the requirements of a special political situation, we are in a position to see his writings in historical perspective.

If we try to judge his work on the "aristocracy of labour" in such a perspective, we may well conclude that his writings of 1914-16 are somewhat less satisfactory than the profound line of thought which he pursued consistently from *What Is To Be Done?* to the *Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question* of 1920. In fact, though much of the analysis of a "labour aristocracy" is applicable to the period of imperialism, the classic nineteenth century (British) model of it, which formed the basis of Lenin's thinking on the subject, was ceasing to provide an adequate guide to the reformism of, at least, the British labour movement by 1914, though as a stratum of the working class it was probably at its peak in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

On the other hand the more general argument about the dangers of "spontaneity" and "selfish" economism in the trade union movement, though illustrated by the historic example of the late-nineteenth century British labour aristocracy, retains all its force. It is indeed one of the most fundamental and permanently illuminating contributions of Lenin to Marxism.

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Discussion Contributions on:

Capitalist Planning and International Contradictions

Bill Warren

Postwar capitalism in the industrialised West and Japan has been characterised, on the whole, by full employment, rapid expansion of total product and living standards, an even more rapid expansion of trade between the main capitalist countries and increased interdependence of the principal capitalist economies. These economic successes have been accompanied by, and in part caused by, the marked increase of state intervention in, and guidance of, the national capitalist economies, particularly in the direction of macro-economic demand management, at first mainly of a conjunctural or short-term character but increasingly oriented, along with other measures, to the acceleration of production and productivity over the longer run. These new conditions have naturally given rise to new contradictions, or at least to new forms of expression of the basic contradictions as they appear under changed conditions.

Specification of these new contradictions as they subsist at the international level, i.e. as between capitalist states, demands that we characterise the interplay between the new internal and the new external contradictions. It is unfortunately symptomatic of much Marxist thought in this field that what many Marxists have been unable to explain at national level, i.e. the absence of cyclical economic disruption, they have sought to negate at the international level, so that the increased interdependence of the capitalist economies has been thought of mainly as the prior condition of renewed crisis or stagnation. However such an outcome need not be expected on a-priori grounds particularly if state control of the economy at national level is paralleled by capitalist state co-operation at international level. That this co-operation, just as with national state economic control, generates new contradictions need not be doubted. Their precise characterisation and the ruling class strategies they imply, together with the implications for socialist strategy, is the theme of this essay.

Three Classes of Contradiction

Broadly speaking, the interplay of three principal classes of contradiction have determined the developing pattern of capitalist international economic relationships in the postwar period and thus the development of the contradictions within the international capitalist economic system. These are: the politico-economic contradictions within the individual capitalist states; the contradictions between the capitalist and socialist blocs; and the contradictions between the capitalist states themselves.

All three sets of contradictions were instrumental in shaping the initial framework of capitalist international economic relations. The decisive initial political impulse towards the elaboration and acceptance of a rationalised, international capitalist economic order was the desire of the United States to eliminate the barriers to its trade and investment which the European capitalist economies, especially Britain, had established in the 1930s.[1] The overwhelming weight of US economic power in the later years of the Second World War and the immediate postwar period gave it the leverage necessary to impose its policy on the rest of the capitalist world. However, the contradiction between the interests of the capitalist world as a whole on the one hand, and those of the socialist bloc together with the subordinate classes of Europe on the other, quickly acted to mould the structure of international economic relationships between capitalist states in a more genuinely co-operative pattern; so that it was not until the 1950s that the contradictions *between* capitalist states began to come to the fore again and introduce new disruptive features into the international economic system. Profoundly affecting both the environment within which capitalist

[1] See G. Kolko, *The Politics of War: Allied Diplomacy and the World Crisis of 1943-45*, 1969, especially Chapters 11-13, and 19.

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economic co-operation was introduced and the actual forms of that co-operation were the contradictions in the individual capitalist states between capitalist classes and working classes which, together with the existence of the Soviet Union, ensured that the capitalist states adopted full employment policies alongside the policies of international economic co-operation.

Full Employment

The acceptance by most developed capitalist states of the necessity to maintain full employment as the political sine qua non of the survival of the capitalist system had a decisive influence on the nature of the trade and financial policies adopted by these countries.

These trade and financial policies as embodied in the Articles of Agreement of the IMF and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) were, in principle, designed to establish an international economic system which would on the one hand, permit national states to pursue the fiscal and monetary policies necessary to maintain full employment by means which were not harmful to other states; and which, on the other hand, would permit the maximum gains from the freedom of international trade.

The freeing of trade was to involve the application of the principle of non-discrimination and the reduction of trade barriers, while the appropriate monetary structure to support the freeing of trade and the pursuit of full employment was to be one which both provided sufficient international liquidity to finance temporary payments deficits, thus avoiding the necessity of precipitate disruptive adjustments, and also provided adequate adjustment mechanisms to right the balances so financed in an orderly, non-deflationary fashion. The three instruments of adjustment envisaged by the IMF originally were to be the internationally regulated changes in exchange rates; control over capital movements; and restrictions on imports to the extent permitted by GATT. The emphasis of the system envisaged was on full employment,[2] in particular on the avoidance of deflationary policies by deficit countries. This emphasis took the form not only of alternative adjustment instruments (to deflation) for the deficit countries and the financing of the deficits while adjustment was under way, but also use of the "scarce currency clause" instrument to enforce adjustment by surplus countries.

In the event, developments took place throughout the postwar period along somewhat (although not entirely) different lines and initially through somewhat different institutions (i.e. not the IMF and GATT).[3] Nevertheless a marked degree of success was achieved in the freeing of trade from previously existing barriers[4] and in the provision of liquidity to finance temporary payments imbalances.

The principal failure of the system lay in the payments adjustment mechanisms which, after the devaluations of 1949, were tacitly deprived of the instrument of exchange rate changes and which moreover increasingly relied on deflationary policies in contradiction to the system's original aims. The problems raised by this failure did not, however, become serious till after the mid-1950s and meantime the stability of exchange rates achieved did at least contribute substantially towards both the establishment of an environment of international co-operation and the avoidance of disruptively frequent and abrupt changes in prices and real wages.

More *immediately* important for the survival of capitalism in the immediate postwar years than the establishment of an international structure of trade and financial co-operation was the Marshall plan, the far-sighted and successful attempt by the US[5] to support the economic recovery of Western Europe in the face of economic collapse and the menace of its rebellious working classes. The Marshall Plan's efforts achieved a staggering redistribution of the capitalist world's financial resources which enabled devastated Europe to utilise the US's immense productive capacity (in surplus after the war).[6]

So the Marshall Plan, the reduction of trade barriers, the co-operative international financing of payments imbalances and the stability of exchange

[2] On this point see A. Romanis, "Balance of Payments Adjustment Among Developed Countries", *I.M.F. Staff* Papers, March 1915, p. 9.

[3] Both the IMF and GATT played a very minor role initially, since Marshall Aid and the European institutions such as the European Payments Union (international European finance) and the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (European trade) to deal with the problems raised by Marshall Aid, temporarily caused the IMF and GATT to be side-stepped.

[4] The proportion of effective liberalisation within the OEEC rose from 56 per cent in 1950 to 94 per cent in 1961. The proportion of quota-free dollar imports to Europe from 10 per cent in 1953 rose to 89 per cent in May 1961. E. F. Denison, *Why Growth Rates Differ: Postwar Experience in Nine Western Countries*, 1967, p. 259, cited in D. S. Landes, *The Unbound Prometheus*, 1969, p. 505. However, recently, in the 1960s, there has been a tendency towards re-introduction of restrictions on capital movements by both the UK and the US, and even slightly restrictions on trade by Britain were increased with the import surcharge.

[5] Not only did the US have the capacity and the gold reserves to enable it to fill the role of standard-bearer for capitalism at this period but its liberal Keynesian top bureaucracy under Roosevelt and to a lesser extent Truman, were ideally suited to look beyond the narrow immediate interests of the large corporations.

[6] See Landes, op. cit., pp. 489-497.

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rates together amounted to an environment of economic international co-operation which encouraged national full employment policies[7] both by reducing externally-induced disruptions of domestic activity[8] and by providing a dynamic source of demand expansion via exports. The full employment and high demand levels in turn have created favourable incentives for trade expansion so that full employment and trade expansion policies have become mutually self-sustaining. The expansion of trade between the developed capitalist economies has proceeded at a rate in excess of the rapid growth of the national economies and in excess of all previously recorded rates.

Internal Contradictions

The reaction of the capitalist states to the internal and external socialist bloc/working-class threat to their survival had produced a system of rapidly expanding economies, internationally organised in such a way as to reduce substantially the prospect of beggar-my-neighbour policies and moving apparently towards freer and freer trade by the mid-1950s.

By the late 1950s, however, the internal contradictions of the system as established began to make themselves felt so that new features began to characterise the economic scene; the increasing frequency and magnitude of payments imbalances, with their associated international monetary crises; and the development of regional discrimination in international trade. These became the principal new expressions of international capitalist contradictions.

Turning to the genesis of increasing payments problems and the financial crises associated with them, we may note initially that they owe nothing to any alleged reappearance of cyclical crises of production and employment.[9] The manipulation of demand in the postwar capitalist economies has effectively eliminated any "natural" rhythm of cyclical crisis[10] and in any case such an explanation could not be relevant for the intensification of payments imbalances when these take the form, not of random fluctuations becoming stronger, but rather of a tendency for certain states to develop deficits on an increasing scale and with greater frequency while others develop surplusses equally on an increasing scale and with increasing frequency.

Underlying much socialist thinking has been the view that there exists a long-run tendency within the capitalist world for productive capacity to outrun the growth of effective demand.[11] This may be envisaged to underlie an increasing tendency to payments imbalances either from intensified international competition leading to greater swings in the fortunes of the competitors or by intensified competition leading to greater and more frequent deficits for the least competitive economies, and the reverse for the most dynamic economies. If a developing market problem did indeed underlie the payments problems of recent years we should expect to find some signs of either a slowing-up in the rate of growth of the capitalist world, or a developing tendency to excess capacity or some combination of the two. The evidence is clear. Far from exhibiting a declining growth rate of total product (or product per head) the capitalist world has exhibited an *accelerated* growth rate in the 1960s compared with the 1950s, i.e. precisely the period when payments imbalances began to loom large.[12] Similarly not only is there no sign of a declining level of capacity utilisation but rather the 1960s have on the whole witnessed greater pressure of demand on resources in the capitalist world.[13]

Payments Imbalances

The increasing importance of payments imbalances after 1957 originated in the failure of the international

[7] Italian capitalism has been an exception in two respects—it both faced the problem of *achieving* full employment (as distinct from maintaining it); and opted to ignore the task, while adopting instead policy measures to improve productivity and total product over the long run, simultaneously encouraging labour emigration as a measure to mitigate the unemployment problem. See A. Shonfield, *Modern Capitalism*, 1965, pp. 176-186, 196-198. However, the Italian economy substantially benefitted from the full employment policies of other countries.

[8] As we shall see, these were not completely avoided.

[9] The reappearance of cyclical crises, in a more intense form after the mid-50s, might be envisaged to exert an influence on the payments balance both via changes in effective demand relative to capacity and via relative cost—price changes.

[10] For an analysis of the European recessions of 1952 and 1958 and the boom of 1955-56 as largely policy-determined, see M. Gilbert, "The Postwar Business Cycle in Western Europe", *American Economic Review*, May, 1962. None of this is intended to deny the existence and effects of "spontaneous" economic forces.

[11] See for example H. Elavi, "Imperialism, Old and New", *Socialist Register 1964*, who, polemicising against theories of capitalist breakdown, substitutes the equally economist stagnation thesis.

[12] The compound growth of real GDP per annum of the developed capitalist world over the period 1960-65 was 4.9 per cent as compared with 3.2 per cent in the period 1955-60. UN, *World Economic Survey 1967*, 1968. If anything, the reverse causal sequence has held good, i.e. payments imbalances have caused a slowing up in the growth rates of the capitalist economies via the deflationary policies adopted to deal with them—as in the latter half of the 1950s for some countries and in the years 1965-67 for W. Germany and the UK.

[13] See the *IMF 1968 Annual Report*, pp. 4 and 5.

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economic system as developed postwar to provide or use adequate adjustment mechanisms to deal with such imbalances before they attained disproportionate dimensions and in the fact that lacking such mechanisms the nature of the economic interdependence subsisting between the principal capitalist states has been such that an initial tendency towards payments disequilibrium, whether of a deficit or surplus nature, tended to become self-perpetuating and cumulative.[14] By the late 1950s the special features of the postwar situation tending to conceal the inadequacy of the accepted adjustment instruments had disappeared and the imminent tendency towards perpetuation and cumulation of deficit/surplus positions of various states had begun to create new problems.

As earlier remarked, the provisions of the IMF had been intended to avoid deflation as an instrument for payments adjustment and to utilise, admittedly not frequently, changes in exchange rates (where appropriate) and the scarce currency clause. Neither of these instruments was used except the first in 1949 and only once thereafter (France 1958) until the mid-1960s.[15] A major factor underlying the failure to use these instruments was the fear the postwar capitalist world hell of inflation,[16] a fear reflected in the view that deficits were a result of financial indiscipline and that the onus of adjustment lay therefore with the deficit states.[17] This view permeated the institutions of capitalist co-operation as well as the national states, in particular the US and the UK, and effectively ruled out utilisation of the scarce currency clause as well as reducing the extent to which import controls and control over capital movements was used for adjustment purposes by deficit states. Moreover, the fear of inflation was a major reason for the harshness of the 1949 devaluations, partly imposed by US pressure—and this in turn was a major reason for the reluctance of many countries subsequently to utilise exchange rate changes as an instrument of payments adjustment.[18] Also of crucial importance in ruling out exchange rate changes as a major adjustment instrument was the fact that the two principal deficit states, the US and the UK, were both reserve currency states and the advantages which it was felt attached to this role were considered to outweigh the advantages of abandoning it, disadvantages which would be brought substantially nearer if not entirely incurred by the adoption of devaluation as a policy instrument.

Failing adequate adjustment mechanisms the adjustment problem was dealt with by what Roosa has described as "systematic ad-hoc-ery" which in effect constituted the use of one or other or both of two types of policy; ad hoc direct intervention in trade and payments; or resort to deflation. The full deficiencies of the system reliant on these measures was concealed throughout the 1940s and 1950s by the fact that it was easy to adjust surpluses and deficits by speeding up or slowing down the pace of import liberalisation; by the immensity of US gold reserves in this period; and by the fact that, owing to the expansionary forces in the capitalist economies, deflationary means of correcting payments imbalances tended to result in a relative slowing up in the rate of growth of total product rather than in large-scale unemployment and production declines.[19]

Growth Rates

However, the effects of the adoption of deflationary policies by the deficit countries were markedly to strengthen those forces at work tending to divide the capitalist world into persistently relatively rapidly growing economies and persistently slowly growing economies[20] thereby making the adjustment problem even more difficult than the absence

[14] This is not to deny the possibility of a reversal of relative trends but to suggest that, without a sudden or at least substantial change in working-class combativeness (as in France, 1968), the alteration of such trends by the capitalist class will not be easy.

[15] Apart from a small up-valuation of the German mark.

[16] The fear of inflation in the capitalist world originates not only from the problems which it poses for reserve currencies and relative competitiveness of too rapidly inflating economies but also from the social tensions to which continuous price increases give rise, and which in fact underlie the wage explosion and expansion of new forms of industrial action throughout Europe at present. Price increases have the effect of dramatising exploitation.

[17] H. G. Johnson, *The World Economy at the Crossroads*, 1965, pp. 24-25.

[18] These advantages were mainly that the reserve currency role helped finance imperialist economic and military activity.

[19] It has also been argued that the reserves of labour in the principal surplus countries, Germany, Italy and Japan, meant that sustained surplus positions did not pose serious problems since the labour reserves created the possibility of expansion of industrial employment without meeting serious inflationary pressures from rising wages. *Romanis*, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

[20] The differences between the slowest and fastest growing major countries have been very great. The US and the UK were the two slowest growing major economies with per annum compound growth rates of total product of 2.3 per cent and 2.1 per cent respectively between 1956 and 1961. Germany, France and Italy on the other hand grew at rates of 5.9 per cent, 4.2 per cent and 6.7 per cent respectively. E. Maddison, *Economic Growth in the West*, 1964, p. 28. Japan, of course, grows faster than any other country.

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of exchange rate changes would have made it anyway.

Initiation of these persistent differences in growth rates occurred in the early postwar period. The major victorious capitalist countries of the Second World War, Britain and the US, had perforce to bear the brunt of the white man's military burden of the struggle against communism and national liberation movements after that war thereby severely handicapping their own economies. Simultaneously, the US, for "sound" anti-communist reasons, set about providing massive help in the reconstruction of the war-devastated nations, in particular Germany and Japan, thereby helping to equip afresh her future principal rivals.[21] Equally ironical was the early US encouragement of discrimination against dollar imports in the period of the dollar problem. All these circumstances, plus the ample reserves of labour to which Italy, Japan and Germany in particular had access, led to the setting of these (subsequently persistent surplus) countries on to an export-led path of rapid economic expansion.

Once launched, the process of export-led growth tended to be self-sustaining and place those countries benefiting from it among the fastest growing of the capitalist world both because export expansion was the most rapidly-growing sector of final demand and because it was the sector of demand whose growth was least likely to give rise to payments problems—rather the reverse—so that the deflationary policies used elsewhere to solve such problems did not act to retard the growth of the countries which did not have them. Similarly, once the deficit economies were launched on a path of relatively slow growth, the payments imbalances and deflationary policies to which this gave rise tended to freeze the situation into one of self-sustaining relatively slow growth. *The result has been a major shift in the world economic power balance in favour of the Common Market countries and Japan and against the US and its junior partner, the UK.* Whereas the US economy dominated the European economies during the great depression of 1929-33 and in the Marshall Plan period, it no longer does so, either in terms of its influence on world trade, or its influence on fluctuations in the European economy (which proceed independently of US fluctuations); or its influence on the long-run growth of the European economies.[22]

All this rather confounded orthodox economic opinion which had predicated deflation as a means of curing deficits and expansion as a means of curing surpluses only to find that such policies ensured the return of deficits to the deficit countries, quite apart from the increasing tendency for such measures to fail in even the short run.

Of crucial importance in the failure of orthodox measures was the fundamental expression of the internal contradictions of capitalism, wage-cost inflation, which frustrated the attempt to realign prices and costs by mild deflation owing to the downward inflexibility of wages and cost-determined prices.

Equally significantly, the dependence of the relative dynamism of the various economies on the relative performance of the export sector has been in part a product of precisely the new interdependence of the capitalist economies. Thus the shape of the new contradictions of capitalism has been moulded by the specific nature of the policies used to solve the old, i.e. the old problems of unemployment and international economic anarchy were solved by full employment policies and international economic co-operation: flowing from these were the phenomena of wage-cost inflation and capitalist interdependence around which, as we have seen, have focused the new contradictions—relating to payments adjustment and accentuated relative power shifts within the capitalist world.

Financial Crises and Monetary Co-operation

After 1957 the immanent weaknesses of the system began to appear with the decisive emergence of the US as a chronic deficit country.[23] The system itself had become one of fixed exchange rates based on gold but utilising large-scale holdings of national currencies as international reserves substituting for gold. While the system could only work if the key reserve currency countries, Britain and the US, were prepared to run deficits, if the deficits became too large and too persistent they would sap the confidence upon which the maintenance of existing

[21] It seemed impossible at the time to imagine that US economic hegemony could ever be seriously threatened by a European/Japanese revival.

[22] On these points see *Maddison*, op. cit., pp. 158-162. An exaggerated idea of the weight of the US economy in the capitalist world may underlie stagnationist views influenced by the generally lower level of capacity utilisation in the US than elsewhere. Cf. D. Horowitz, *Imperialism and Revolution*. This may also explain the exaggerated thesis of US hegemony over the capitalist world (as advanced by G. Arrighi and J. S. Saul, "Nationalism and Revolution in Sub-Sahara Africa", *Socialist Register, 1969*, p. 144), and the equally incorrect exaggeration of the role of large US firms abroad. The US economy nevertheless exerts a powerful influence on other capitalist economies, even if it cannot dominate them, specially in recent months via capital markets.

[23] The US has been in deficit continuously from 1957 to date. Apart from the general causative factors mentioned above which have steadily eroded the current balance, US military and aid expenditures abroad were important reasons for the deficit. A major aggravating factor was the establishment of convertibility of European currencies in 1958.

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exchange rates and thus the credibility of the reserve currencies depended, thereby precipitating disequilibrating flows of funds.[24] Nor could the various arrangements made to supplement international reserves solve the problem since, as Johnson has remarked, the problem is that "under the present system adjustment occurs by natural competitive realignment of prices and costs so slowly that the resultant deficits are too large to be manageable under existing arrangements".[25]

Thus the international financial crises, involving large scale speculative movements threatening or bringing about the downfall of existing parities, have emerged as a monetary dimension of the payments adjustment problem, itself the result of domestic inflation and the reluctance of the UK and the US to surrender the financial positions they occupied as key reserve currency countries even though their economic weight no longer justified this role. These financial and payments problems have occasioned the development of various new methods and acts of international co-operation among capitalist states. These arrangements have managed to keep the system working.[26] However inter-capitalist harmony has always been relative and whichever particular policies were adopted was invariably the result of a continuous struggle between the US and the UK on the one hand and their principal continental rivals grouped around the Common Market on the other.

Developments proceeded along two main lines up to mid-1963—strengthening of the IMF on the one hand and strengthening the reserve currency system based on the dollar on the other. The former was accomplished by increases in Fund quotas agreed in 1958 and 1962, by the Fund's development of "stand-by" credit facilities, and by the General Arrangement to Borrow of 1961-62. Strengthening of the dollar's key currency role essentially meant arranging a series of ad hoc measures designed to help the dollar through what was regarded as its temporary period of difficulties—measures including currency swaps, pre-payment of past loans, etc. Co-operation of European countries in these arrangements was compelled by the necessity to keep the system going, plus the increasing pressure they hoped to be able to exert over US policies.[27]

[24] Johnson describes this as the internal contradiction of the system, op. cit., p. 26.

[25] *Johnson*, op. cit., p. 35.

[26] Even so far working at a lower level of crisis in 1969 than 1968.

[27] *Johnson*, op. cit., p. 30. Other factors compelling European co-operation may have been more directly of a political-strategic character, e.g. the recognition of America's disproportionate contribution to the "defence" of the capitalist world and the consequences for that role if the dollar were seriously threatened.

By mid-1963 the attempt to maintain the dollar reserve system as the basis for international monetary arrangements was abandoned as the possibilities of ad hoc support arrangements reached their limits and the US deficit began to appear more permanent. The shift towards the alternative line of strengthening the system through the IMF eventually resulted in the agreement on Special Drawing Rights of July 1969, the innovatory aspect of which lay in the fact that the SDRs created new international reserves which were not backed by any sort of marketable asset but were dependent for their acceptability on agreement by the countries concerned to use them in settlement of international imbalances.

The SDRs mark a major step forward in international capitalist monetary co-operation which it would be myopic not to recognise.[28] The lesson seems clear—that, *whatever their differences up to now, the capitalist states have in the last resort always co-operated to keep the system going*[29] and have only allowed their differences to affect the terms on which it is kept going—the terms relating mainly to control over the liquidity created and over the institutions of international economic co-operation as well as over the domestic (and other) economic policies of the deficit countries.

However, we should note that this co-operative achievement is only a partial solution to the problems of financing payments imbalances and providing adequate long-run reserves and is no solution at all to the adjustment problem which remains unsolved.[30]

Common Market

At just about the same time as the US deficit began to assume chronic dimensions, the Common

[28] Within the overall context of the advance in co-operation signified by the SDRs, the differences of interest between the states made themselves felt in the struggle over the conditions attached to the SDRs, especially over the achievement of payments balance by the deficit countries. On balance, the US appears to have conceded little in return for the increased liquidity at its command. However, the EEC countries have not accepted the dominance of the dollar as a permanent feature of the international situation. Current initiatives towards the harmonisation of monetary policies within the Common Market and the de facto establishment of a common European currency, perhaps via the freezing of current intra-EEC parities, are directed towards challenging the dollar's predominance in the longer run.

[29] The partial success of the co-operative attempt to cauterise the sterling ulcer in the international monetary system should also be noted.

[30] The answer is likely to combine more frequent exchange rate changes with further attempts to improve the adjustment process by more state planning and control of wages.

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Market was formed and was to become the central institutional locus for co-operation of the major European economies in asserting their politico-economic interests in the face of the apparently overwhelming might of the US economy. This development was just, but only just, reconcilable with the rules of GATT, but difficulties of interpretation of those rules were swept aside by US co-operation and encouragement in the establishment of the Common Market. This ironic situation was the product of US concern with promoting the Cold War and mitigating the dollar problem—the latter itself in the last analysis an aspect of US concern for western unity.

A tradition of intra-European co-operation had already become partly established by the necessity for co-operation in the administration of Marshall Aid and in the co-operative solution of the dollar problem, which meant among other things the development of the OEEC as an instrument for trade liberalisation within Europe and the EPU as an instrument for monetary co-operation on a regional basis. The resultant early side-stepping of the IMF and GATT was a significant portent of European co-operation (by some countries) to advance their interests against those of the US, particularly since the IMF was regarded as an instrument of US policy.

Very quickly, the divergent interests of the Common Market countries on the one hand, and the US on the other (plus the UK) became apparent, since the Common Market presented trade obstacles to US exporters precisely when the US deficit began seriously to occupy the attention of US policy-makers. Not only was regional trade discrimination against US manufactures permanently institutionalised but a serious dent was made in US agricultural exports as a result of the Common Market agricultural policy with its levies on imports of agricultural products. US attempts to reverse or at least neutralise the effects of its earlier mistake in encouraging the formation of the Common Market either failed [31] or at best registered a rather limited success.[32]. US versus European conflicts in the international monetary field paralleled those in the trading sphere.

The curiously ambiguous nature of the Common Market and indeed of US-European monetary rivalries arises from the fact that a constant conflict exists between the interests of the individual states of the Common Market and between the interests of these states as a whole and the US. And these states, besides having historical (immediate postwar at any rate) reasons for co-operation, have sound economic reasons for looking to their collective interest in view of the relative weight of the US economy vis-a-vis that of any single European economy. Moreover, this ambiguity is further compounded by the circumstance that the interests of the capitalist world as a whole have to be borne in mind in the postwar period so that the US occasionally and with justice dons the mantle of defender of the West with the reminder that the continued development of regional discrimination weakens "Atlantic unity" and threatens a return to the 1930s.[33]

Problem of Interdependence

We may thus characterise the postwar international politico-economic contradictions between capitalist states as taking the following antagonistic forms:

(i) increasingly chronic deficit and surplus positions of various states—i.e. the adjustment problem;
(ii) the dislocation of the monetary system arising from the adjustment problem; and
(iii) the development of regional trade discrimination.

Underlying these phenomena has been the reversal or threatened reversal of previous power positions in the capitalist world—*in particular the reversal of the relative power relationship of the US and the UK vis-a-vis the Common Market countries.*[34] More specifically (since such reversals of relative power positions is characteristic of *any* period of capitalism), the particular form of these contradictions ((i) to (iii) above) and in fact their intensity has been determined by *the reversal of previous power positions of capitalist states in conditions of full employment, inflation and growing economic interdependence among capitalist states.*

Successful full employment policies, resultant wage-cost inflation and the associated trade and financial policies have had the effect of bringing about a radical transformation in the direction of the greater interdependence of capitalist economies while at the same time making extremely difficult adjustment to that interdependence in a harmonious fashion.

Thus the result of inter-capitalist economic relations postwar is that the policy decisions of capitalist states, concerning both internal and external matters, have to take much greater account of

[31] E.g. the US 1962 Trade Expansion Act, on which see *H. G. Johnson*, op. cit.

[32] As with the Kennedy Round of GATT.

[33] This ambiguity is reflected in the part success of the Kennedy Round and the semi-permanent differences between the Common Market states.

[34] US shares of total industrial production in the non-communist world declined from 51.6 per cent of the total in 1950 to 44 per cent in 1968. US shares of non-communist world trade in manufactures declined from 27.3 per cent in 1950 to 20.2 per cent in 1968. *National Institute Economic Review*, various issues.

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developments in the rest of the world than ever before, i.e. the independence of action of capitalist states vis-a-vis one another has been much reduced.[35] It is the struggle for *room for manoeuvre*, in circumstances of economic interdependence which ensure that failure in this struggle threatens permanent relative decline, as with the US, or permanent subordination, as with the UK, which makes this as much a power struggle as an economic one, a struggle which cannot be understood simply in terms of competition for markets.

Role of the State

To argue that the capitalist states are in a position of reduced independence of action in relation to one another is not, however, to argue that they are in a position of reduced independence in relation to civil society in general, or the large monopolies, or the international institutions of economic co-operation. On the contrary, the international institutions which have developed have acquired no power independent of the national states constituting them and the recognition of these states that they have interests in common.[36] Changes in their policies and rules have been directly related to changes in the power and views (and tasks) of the constituent states even though the bureaucracies of the international institutions may have helped formulate those views. *Further, the measures of international economic co-operation achieved partly through these international institutions have on the whole provided a favourable environment for the exercise of greater state power vis-a-vis the national economies by limiting trade disruption and financing payments deficits thus facilitating more effective national planning in a generally expansive environment.*

In general, the development of state intervention in the national capitalist economies in bourgeois democratic political systems has strengthened the role of the state vis-a-vis civil society. Nor do the large, oligopolistic firms, international or otherwise, represent a power in some sense increasingly independent of, or impinging upon the power of the bourgeois state. While there is clearly a difference between the interests of the capitalist state (representing capitalism as a whole and tending to look to the longer-run necessities, political as well as economic) and those of the large capitalist firms (looking to their own individual profits), there is no evidence that such firms (or their directors) have become more narrow-minded with increasing size or more powerful in relation to the state. On the contrary, provided it is felt to be looking to the interests of the system as a whole, the bourgeois state has greater powers than ever before to deal with any large firm and uses them more frequently.[37] Indeed, the power which large size brings to modern capitalist concerns is in many cases the desired result of a deliberate policy pursued by the capitalist state, particularly in Britain where the promotion of mergers has been a major aspect of state policy for rationalisation of the British economy.

It is true that freedom of capital movements alongside the difference between the rates of growth of different economies, plus differences in national wage and productivity levels has brought in its train various problems of control in part connected with an increasing tendency for large firms to establish manufacturing activities abroad. However, the general problem of fund-shifting (when it becomes serious) is being met by the development of co-operation among central banks (not yet entirely adequately) while the problem of boundary crossing in the productive activities of large firms has been much exaggerated.[38] In any case, it is principally a

[35] On the financial aspect of interdependence, Young points out that such *medium-size* financial powers as "Canada, Japan, Austria, Spain and Australia (S. Africa's gold gives her a special position) may singly be in no position to exert major financial pressure on the US. But the functioning of an interlocking monetary system requires their active co-operation and this by itself imposes limits on the freedom of financial action of stronger powers. The total UK private overseas investment of £11,500 million becomes a hostage to fortune rather than a lever of power, and even more does this apply to the corresponding US investment of $70,000 million." G. K. Young, *Finance and World Power*, 1968. Of course, there are countries, especially in the underdeveloped world where US investment will still be a lever of power. But the dual and contradictory effect of foreign investment on the relative power position of a major capitalist economy has already been fully revealed in the English sickness. Young also notes "the predicaments of the US government balancing the pros and cons of a continuing deficit-policy, continued encouragement or restriction of overseas investment, domestic credit expansion or construction" in the context of interdependence.

Cf. also "The assessment of a country's reserve needs will therefore depend greatly on the degree of independence which it wishes to preserve in pursuit of its policies"—*Ossola Report*, cited in *Young*, p. 131.

[36] ". . . The international financial mechanism has been adapted to new dimensions of state control on a world scale," *Young*, op. cit., p. 123.

[37] Only too often socialists have characterised the capitalist states as the "instrument" or "tool" of the monopolies or capitalists. Such misleading metaphors tend to conceal the powerful initiating, directing and controlling activities of the capitalist state. A more accurate metaphor would be to characterise the state as the "leadership" of the capitalist class or alternatively as the "guardian" of bourgeois society.

[38] "When the American 'invasion' is set in perspective it is only 5½ per cent of total European spending on plant and equipment, and in France, the most resentful recipient, American investment is only 3.7 per cent of the country's annual total; in Germany it is some 4 per cent"; *Young*, op. cit., p. 208.

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problem for the countries of origin of the firms investing abroad since simple measures of state control and counter-development can limit foreign domination of an industry it is felt should be in national hands.[39] More important, firms operating in foreign countries, far from representing an alien, uncontrollable influence, are in effect very much in the thrall of their host countries.[40]

Most international direct investment of this type flows from the slowly growing UK and US economies to the faster-growing European economies, and is mainly a reflection of the relative dynamism of the different national economies. Such investment may present problems to the domicile countries of the investing firms but these can and have been dealt with by various restrictive measures both in the US and the UK. Indeed, these measures, especially those of the US after 1963 and 1966, are an indication of the national limits to the process of international shifting of the productive activities of the large "international" firms. *The limits to this process are set by the relatively slow growth of the US economy (and UK economy) which both stimulate this type of investment in the first place and set boundaries to it in the second* by the negative effects of relatively slow growth on the payments position.

Political Implications

The reduced independence of capitalist states vis-a-vis one another creates pressures to increase their control over their own population. In particular, while internal contradictions have accentuated international capitalist contradictions via the wage-cost inflation link, this same link has channelled the international contradictions back into, and with the effect of accentuating, the internal contradictions. The sharper the international contradictions, the greater the pressure to regulate wages internally and to control more closely the economy in order to accelerate production and productivity growth.[41] The tendency of inter-capitalist contradictions, in combination with inter-capitalist co-operation, is thus likely to be towards *an acceleration of the growth rates of the capitalist economies.*[42]

The political implications of this for socialist strategy cannot be precisely delineated without a separate analysis of the developing contradictions within the political structures of capitalism. Nevertheless certain scattered implications maybe suggested.

Negatively, it should be clear that any socialist strategy based upon either capitalist breakdown or stagnation is irrelevant.

Secondly, the prospect of continuing and even perhaps accelerating capitalist growth rates alongside determined attempts to reincorporate in a more controlled fashion the trade unions and working class into a more managed capitalism is likely to face the revolutionary movement with new dangers from various brands of social democracy,[43] however well-intentioned the social democrats may be.

More positively, the new uncertainties and delicate balancings required under state-controlled interdependent capitalist states are likely to give rise to new political conjunctures and possibilities of new initiatives by the left.

The strategic link for co-ordination of such initiatives is suggested by the increasing intervention of the state in the economy, in collaboration with the biggest firms, in such a way as to affect every aspect of economic, political and social life. Under conditions of bourgeois democracy the increase in state control over society puts democracy on the agenda as the principal central strategic focus for the socialist revolution.

Unfortunately, however, a tendency has developed in the Communist Party[44] and elsewhere to characterise the "big monopolies" as the main danger to democracy, suggesting an increasing encroachment of these powers of darkness on the bourgeois-democratic state.[45] This "economist" approach fails

[39] Developments in Britain and France are more significant for the counteraction of the states concerned than for the US "invasion" itself: cf. the development of the British computer industry.

[40] "So far from being able to dominate governments, the American giants become hostages in the societies where they operate: the very size of their credit and financial needs makes them dependent on the approval and assistance of central institutions", *Young*, op. cit., p. 208.

[41] Resort to crude deflation with its retarding effects on the deficit economies is likely to become decreasingly evident as the US strives to reassert its earlier hegemony. In this respect, the dirigiste Kennedy-Johnstone US regimes may prove to have been more portentous than the Nixon regime. Britain, however, is likely to prove a semi-permanent cripple.

[42] This has already happened in the 1960s since the overall acceleration of the growth of the developed capitalist world owes much to the acceleration of the US economy in the 1960s which was itself a deliberately dirigist response under Kennedy to the European threat. OECD studies for Europe, North America and Japan foresee even faster rates of growth in the 1970s than in the 1960s.

[43] Unfortunately illustrated by the left-wing TU support for the TUC's attempt to act as the government's policeman within the TUs.

[44] Also in the French and Italian communist parties.

[45] ". . . The concentration of economic power is paralleled by a drive to concentrate political power in the same few hands of these super firms. Monopoly is profoundly anti-democratic. . . . Representatives of the big monopolies who already occupy key positions on various state boards which support the interests of the monopolies, are attacking the parliamentary system and calling for a coalition government and even for a government of 'businessmen'." J. Gollan, *Speech to the World Communist Conference*, June 1969, p. 6.

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to take account of the political structures mediating the exercise of bourgeois power in society at large, and ignores the greater powers of the capitalist state vis-a-vis the economy in general and the individual large firms in particular (whose collective interests it upholds in the long run).

More, this economist approach creates the theoretical basis for a view of the bourgeois-democratic state as having its independence threatened from the side of the big monopolies while the same independence is upheld from the other side by the working class and other democratic forces. Such a conception opens out the possibility of treating the bourgeois-democratic state *in practice* as a semi-independent (or at least potentially so) complex of institutions which it only requires the working-class and others to lean on sufficiently hard to bend to the popular will in the direction of socialism. The logical consequence is the view that socialism can be achieved by the conquest of a parliamentary majority[46] which then proceeds to deal with the main enemy (whose state has abandoned it), by nationalising the big monopolies. Socialism is thus not achieved by a confrontation with the bourgeois state and the breaking of its power by the establishment of alternative organs of popular power but by parliamentary decrees once Parliament has been won.[47] Thus the content of the struggle for democracy as the central strategic element in the struggle for socialism is here fundamentally that of the defence and extension of bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

Unfortunately for this approach postwar conditions have reaffirmed more strongly than ever before the fundamentally undemocratic nature of the bourgeois state as a result of the declining real democratic content of bourgeois democratic institutions in the era of state-guided oligopolistic economies. Accordingly, while at any time a strategy based on the defence and extension of existing bourgeois democracy would necessarily be a fundamentally defensive strategy and therefore incapable of providing that alternative pole of attraction necessary to develop a movement for a new kind of society, such a strategy is also under present conditions an increasingly *irrelevant* one, since the situation is not that of the subversion of existing bourgeois-democratic institutions but the fact that, because the state is doing much more within the framework of these institutions, their fundamentally undemocratic nature is being increasingly exposed.

Thus a revolutionary perspective places the issue of democracy at the centre of its strategy but the democracy is a *democracy with a new content*, a democracy of popular power which displaces the atomising, de-politicising system of bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

[46] The Communist Party of course makes it clear that a parliamentary majority can only be won by dint of expanding class struggle but the fundamental problem is how this struggle can bring about a *breach in the power* of the capitalist state. The classic Marxist view that the bourgeois parliamentary electoral system serves to *atomise* the masses and reduce their *collective* potentialities for action and development of ideological clarity directly contradicts the assumption of the *British Road to Socialism* that the first breach in capitalist power will be via Parliament.

[47] "But in the final analysis the movement must aim to express itself in the struggle for a parliamentary majority pledged to socialism". *Gollan*, op. cit., p. 8.

Why did it happen?

Jack Lindsay

In warmly welcoming Maurice Dobb's thoughtful and balanced contribution to the question of distortions of socialism, how they arise, how far they involve historically inevitable elements, I should like to add some considerations to his first section, which deals with the way in which the desperate situation in the early years of the Soviet Union meant that "industry and agriculture have to be ruthlessly subordinated to the requirements of war economy, which among other things means a high degree of centralisation" and so on. In those years we must recall that the Russian proletariat, relatively small in numbers, had borne the brunt of the revolutionary struggle, the civil war and the wars of intervention; their ranks had been badly thinned. Then, in the needs of reconstruction, the survivors were largely drawn into the party or into the sphere of management. The "working-class", emerging from this terrible period, was now made up of the less active sections carrying on from pre-war years and of new recruits from the countryside. The latter made up the vast majority. There was thus a deep gap in general between the matured sections, drawn into various kinds of upper levels of control

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and management, and the "working class' of raw peasants with a low political and technological capacity.

Historical factors

Hence in the situation of drastic needs which Dobb outlines there could not be any effective give-and-take between the "working-class" and the proletarians absorbed into the party and into the State or economic apparatus. There thus willy-nilly appeared a Dictatorship of the Party in place of a Dictatorship of the Proletariat. There was nothing underhand or Machiavellian in this development; it was the result of purely objective historical factors. Things could not have been otherwise, given the Russian situation. And they need not have worked out badly, if there had been sufficient consciousness of what had happened and what steps were required to bring about a fuller situation of socialist democracy. The disaster was the crippling and then the death of Lenin, and the assumption of power by Stalin. Stalin did not want to change the system of authority exercised wholly from above; he did everything to strengthen and petrify the situation of authoritative centralism and bureaucracy.

Lenin's last years

Everyone interested in just what happened in the early decisive years should read *Lenin's Last Struggle* by Moshe Lewin. This book, extremely sympathetic to Lenin, is largely based on recently published Soviet material: the *Journal* in volume XLV of the 5th edition of Lenin's *Works* (appearing originally in *Voprosy Istorii* No. 2, 1963); the *Memoirs of Fotieva*, one of Lenin's personal secretaries; and the articles that Lenin managed to get into print in his last months, despite the oppositions of the Politburo. Lenin had been worried for some time by the problems emerging out of the difficult situation which Dobb has sketched and which I have further sought to describe. But his health was failing. He was in particular, anxious about the treatment of the Caucasian Republics. On November 24th, 1922 he abstained from voting on the composition of the commission to investigate the Georgian troubles; next day the Politburo approved the composition of the commission under Dzherzhinsky. The commission left for Tbilisi and behaved in a high-handed way, Orjonikedzi going so far as to strike one of Mdivani's supporters. Lenin meanwhile was at odds with Stalin on the question of the foreign trade-monopoly, considering that Stalin's views would lead to a disintegration of, or at least a serious blow to a socialist economy. On December 13th he suffered two dangerous strokes. Two days later he wrote to Stalin saying that he had taken the necessary steps to retire and had come to an agreement with Trotsky, who would take up and defend his position. Stalin saw that he was up against too strong an opposition, and on the 18th the decision taken on foreign trade was rescinded and Stalin was made responsible for supervising Lenin.

Lenin wrote to Trotsky congratulating him on their victory. Next day Stalin made a fierce personal attack on Krupskaya for having taken down this letter at Lenin's dictation. That night Lenin was again half-paralysed. Lenin, after some difficulty, got permission to dictate some notes (known later as his Testament). In January-February 1923 he was well enough to dictate five articles. On January 4th he added to his Testament the proposition to demote Stalin. Later in the month he pressed for the dossier of the Dzerzhinsky Commission. The Politburo did its best to keep the dossier from him; its session had endorsed the commission's conclusions and whitewashed Orjonikidze. Finally in February Lenin got what he wanted; he was also using his own private committee to find out what was happening. He wrote again to Trotsky asking him to take up the defence of the Georgian CC; next day, March 6th he wrote a letter to Stalin demanding an apology for his treatment of Krupskaya; he also wrote to the Georgians stating that he was on their side against Stalin and Orjonikidze. Kamenev was told by Krupskaya that Lenin meant to crush Stalin politically. But the strain of the situation was more than he could bear; on the 10th a new stroke deprived him of the power to speak. He lingered on, hopelessly trying to find out what was happening, unable to do anything about it, and died on January 21st, 1924. A more tragic position it is hard to imagine.

Georgian situation

Why did he take the Georgian situation so much to heart? The reason can only be that he saw in the Great-Russian chauvinism expressed by Stalin and the others a definite hardening of the authoritative attitudes which had already invaded the Party's attitudes to people. For him it crystallised what was wrong in the developments, and he wanted to strike hard against it. He recognised that there could now be no half-measures in dealing with Stalin if the sort of socialism he cherished was to be established in Russia.

Mr. Lewin deals with the efforts that Lenin made to formulate in his last articles various steps that would have helped to break down the authoritative and bureaucratic formations which he saw coming about. If he had lived he would certainly have carried on this struggle, accepting centralisation and certain forms of compulsion that had been made inevitable by the historical situation, but

completed on page 224.

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Revolutionary Romanticism

Marshall Harris

Willie Thompson's contribution on "Revolutionary Romanticism" (*Marxism Today*, May 1970) appears to be well-intentioned, judging from his final sentence: "We must never be unprepared to learn". But his approach is highly sectarian, and this is especially revealed by his static analysis of the movements he describes and by his narrow selectivity of the facts. I would like to take issue with the whole of his article, which, it seems to me, makes a negative contribution to the development of unity on the left, but I am particularly disturbed by his ill-informed characterisation of the Black Power movement and his apparent ignorance of the way this movement has developed. If left unchallenged he could do much harm to the developing revolutionary consciousness of the Black militant groups in Britain, the appreciation of their position by white progressives, and the potentially good relations the Communist Party might have with them. Therefore I shall confine myself to the question of Black Power.

Black Power Movement

I have been closely involved with this movement *in Britain*. Thompson states: "Black Power as a major political force is likely to remain confined to the USA". I do not wish to quibble about whether a force is "major" or merely *significant*. Thompson's formulation, if we accept his use of the term "major", may be correct but it obscures the issue. The fact is that Black Power is not only a US phenomenon, and not only a "likely" force in the future. It is already, here and now, a *significant* force in Britain. It is significant in numbers, ideology, and potential.

It goes without saying that in a journal of this kind, social phenomena should be seen historically, in their development. Thompson fails to do this and is therefore unable to grasp where the Black Power movement has come from or where it is going. The nearest he comes to a dialectical approach is when he says: "It is the historic merit of Black Power . . . to have taught the racialists that their provocations will be repaid with interest". Apart from that correct judgment he sees the movement as *not* developing—"Black Power . . . is likely to remain confined to the USA"—and staying in the rut of Black inverted racism and "Black Zionism", etc. This is not surprising, considering that he takes Stokely Carmichael as the "most widely read spokesman", which shows that he has not at all understood what has happened in the USA.

Black Panthers in the USA

A recent opinion poll in the USA showed that 40 per cent of young black people support the Black Panthers. In the February 1970 issue of *Marxism Today* the Editorial Comments quoted in full the appeal of the CPUSA for support for the Panthers. The appeal included the following words: "Since January 1968 no less than 28 leaders of this organisation have been murdered. In the last six months alone, 40 leaders and 125 of its members have been arrested and many have been charged, on the word of police informers, with major crimes including murder". Since that appeal the roster has grown.

Why has this happened? J. Edgar Hoover knows the answer to this when he describes the Panthers as the greatest threat American society has ever known. In Hoover's language, for "American" read "Capitalist, Imperialist and Racist". The Black Panther Party in the USA is a militant black organisation actively and vigorously putting forward the Marxist outlook to its members and Socialism as its objective.

One of its leading spokesmen is Eldridge Cleaver, now in Algeria, officially described by the Panthers as their "Minister of Information in Exile". Later I shall quote from some of his words, and from other Panther spokesmen. Meanwhile, let us look at a bit of history.

The first signs of current Black militancy in the USA that were visible from England were the Civil Rights marches. On the whole their aims were integration and the right to live by the same standards as white Americans. Contrasting with this, and separate from the Civil Rights movement, were the Black Muslims, advocating religious, cultural and social separation. The Muslims taught the black people that they had no need for shame, no need to become black "white" men.

Concurrent with the development of these movements, the Cuban Revolution, the Vietnam war, and the progress of liberation movements in Africa were all having their impact on the black community.

Out of this melting pot of movements and events came Malcolm X, former dope-peddlar and hustler who turned Muslim and found his self-respect. Malcolm gradually drew away from Elijah Muhammed, the Muslim separatist leader, and turned to Africa, which he toured. He returned, having learned that his people were fighting the same enemy

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as the Arabs, Africans, and Vietnamese. He discovered that the enemy's face has no unique colour, and that liberation, in the end, meant destruction of the Imperialist system. *It was at this point in his career, and by now he had a following, that Malcolm X was assassinated.* It is said that the hand that pulled the trigger was that of a Black Muslim, but who knows what provocateurs were sent into that movement?

With Malcolm's death it looked as if the move towards Marxism had been halted. But the message had penetrated.

Within a relatively short time the Black Panther Party began to develop from a self-defence movement further and further towards a Marxist-Leninist position. In the course of that development they dropped all racist slogans, recognised the nature of the bourgeois state, accepted the need for, and actively pursued, alliance with the militant white organisations.

"Power to the People"

The Panthers (in common with all the Black Power movements) recognise that they, *and only they*, can organise their own people, at grass roots level.

This conforms to the classic Leninist position on minorities. Comrade Klugmann pointed this out when he said: ". . . differing approaches of the two sectors of the working class or working people (struggling in different situations), with possibly different slogans, would strengthen, in fact, their fight for the *same cause*" (*Marxism Today*, January, 1970, "Some Aspects of Lenin's Approach to the Question of Nationalism and Internationalism").

The Panthers recognise that exploitation reveals itself most sharply to the Black people in the form of racism, and therefore the forms of struggle against it feature most prominently in their propaganda and activities.

Because their people have been subjected to sudden death and brutality at the hands of white racists, and especially by the police, since time immemorial, they organise self-defence and claim the right, guaranteed by the US Constitution to *all* citizens, to carry arms. They are building up the self-respect, confidence, and militancy of the Black people; at the same time they are constructing a disciplined Party, purged of vacillators and provocateurs, whom, in their situation of extreme persecution, they cannot afford to carry. The Panther leadership knows that, in the long run, a single non-racial revolutionary Party is necessary, but believe the time is not yet ripe—much work still remains to be done amongst the working class of both races. The slogan of the US Black Panther Party is: "Power to the People", and this is where they have got to. At this point a few quotations from Eldridge Cleaver and Bobby Seale (Chairman of the Party, now in jail facing a framed murder charge, and doing four years for contempt of court) seem appropriate. I hope comrades will bear with me in reading these, because they express the ideological level of the militant vanguard of the Black people in the USA.

> "The United States has the yes-no power of decision over all colonialism in the world today. There is not a colonial regime on the face of the earth today that could survive six months if the US opposed it; and in many cases without the active military and economic support of the US, the exploiting, murderous regimes would be dashed to bits by the exploited people themselves. The new left (in the US—M.H.) understands this thoroughly. It also knows that America's support of colonialism must be shattered before the resources and administrative machinery of the nation can be freed for the task of creating a truly free and humanistic society here at home. It is at this point, at the juncture of foreign policy and domestic policy, that the Negro revolution becomes one with the world revolution".
>
> (Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, Jonathan Cape, 1969)

> "And ultimately we shall witness the merging of the Negro revolution with a broader movement demanding disarmament and conversion of the economy to peaceful purposes. This prospect, of an alliance between the Negro revolution, the new left and the peace movement, fills the power structure with apprehension: witness the furious reaction provoked by Martin Luther King when he called for the cessation of American bombings of North Vietnam, negotiations with the NLF, and admission of China to the UN". (*Ibid.*)

It was not long after this that King was silenced.

> "We have been struggling for 400 years, as many of you Black brothers are well aware. I know you dream about home, but when you come home, come home and realise that you have a fight here, that we have the right to control our destinies in our Black community; as the Chicano people have a right to control their destinies in their Chicano (poor Mexican and Puerto Rican—M.H.) community . . . as the American Indians have a right to control their destiny; as the poor, oppressed white people have a right to control their destiny (many poor, oppressed white people must realise that it's the ruling class).
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> "The Indo-Americans, the Chicano-Americans, the Latino-Americans and Brown people and Black people in America are beginning to move more and more in opposition to the oppressive conditions that the *same* avaricious businessmen and demagogic, lying politicians create and maintain . . . The workers of this country are beginning to move more and more, day by day, step by step from a lower to a higher level in opposing the ruling class circles, because they (the ruling class circles) are the ones who keep racism going . . . So, power to the people, brothers. And please, come on

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home brothers. And when you get home we'll be waiting for you". (Bobby Seale, in appeal to Black servicemen in Vietnam. Reprinted in *The Black Panther*—the party weekly—for Jan. 3rd, 1970).

Inside Britain

These quotes should be sufficient to make it clear how far away from Thompson's picture the Black Panthers are. They are the representative and vanguard party of Black power in the USA, and it is just not good enough to say that "there is no analysis of the class division in either white society or black" or that "it does not look beyond the Ghetto, and can see revolution only in terms of Black liberation".

Turning now to Britain—I am not qualified to speak of the Black Power movement in Trinidad, though its very existence makes nonsense of Thompson's thesis—we find that, influenced by developments in the USA, a growing Black Power movement is developing. Although it appears to be going along the same road as the US movement, it is not yet so far along it. The movement is not unified, and contains a number of different organisations, at different ideological and organisational levels, and within them, individual levels of development. The two organisations with whom I have had contact are the Universal Coloured Peoples Association, and the British-based Black Panthers; other groups also exist. Both the UCPA and the Panthers have repudiated separatist policies and discredited extremist leadership. The bourgeois press still presents Michael X, Obi Egbuna, and Roy Sawh as spokesmen for Black Power in Britain, but the two organisations I have mentioned (and possibly others as well) do not follow these people, or accept their views. Both groups have followings in London and other major immigrant centres, predominantly Caribbean, they have fraternal contacts with Pakistani and Indian groups too. They are deeply

White progressives must endeavour to understand the circumstances which confront Black people in Britain today and the situation in which the Black organisations work. West Indians, Pakistanis, Africans, Cypriots and Irish have all been subjected to many generations of foreign Imperialist exploitation, and owe their presence in Britain to the fact that depredation of their own lands has forced them to come here for employment and a few crumbs from the Imperialist cake. As far as the Caribbean immigrants are concerned, their oppression began when they were sold into slavery from Africa, and although this took place generations ago, such an experience burns itself deeply into a people's attitude and consciousness. For the Afro-Asian peoples of the Caribbean, Africa, and the Indian continent the face of the oppressor has been overwhelmingly white, and the blatant racialist discrimination which they experience here at the hands of employers, landlords, social service employees, police, magistrates, and, alas, ordinary working people too, reinforces the feeling that whites cannot be trusted. What is more, when they see the living standards enjoyed by native Europeans, in no small measure derived from skimming the cream from colonial and neo-colonial resources, and the concessions made to the native working-class from Imperialist super-profits, it is not surprising if they suspect that the whole of the indigenous population has a vested interest in keeping things the way they are. It is clear that in this situation the mechanical application of the policy of Black-and-White-Unite can cut no ice and would be tactically inappropriate. *The Black Community must organise itself*, and white progressives who understand the situation and are genuinely prepared to give fraternal help must bend over backwards not to interfere with the movement or attempt to "take it over".

The only way to achieve eventual unity is for the white progressive movement to be seen to be combating racialism and imperialism and above all to be seen helping the native-born working people to liberate themselves from the vestiges of a colonialist and exploiting-nation outlook. Let us not be complacent about this—most of us have been born and bred in an atmosphere and educational environment which has regarded other nations as inferior, and we must learn how to examine our own actions and motives in the light of this. Solidarity and support for our Black brothers whenever they are attacked, arrested, or discriminated against is the immediate responsibility of the left on this question, together with resolute struggle against Imperialism. On this basis we can look forward to the day when the militant immigrant organisations progress even beyond the point the US Black Panthers have now reached, to a united movement for peace and Socialism.

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seeking always for the points when the process could be reversed and democratic activity from below stimulated and liberated. He recognised that a key factor was the development of culture among the people—culture both of a general and of a technological kind. Without that cultural development there was no hope of escaping from the dilemma of authority imposed on a more or less passive population. This position he set out in his last article, *Better Fewer, but Better* (March 4th 1923).

This story of Lenin's last days should be known to all communists. To talk of Leninism and of fidelity to Lenin without realising what his struggle was in those tragic days is to insult his memory.

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